Quatervois

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Quatervois

by StratsWrote, whiskeyandspite

Summary

“Are you a gambling man, Will?”

Will blinked. “I’ve never had the time or means.”

“You have both now,” Hannibal spread a palm at his side, a strangely welcoming gesture. “You seek independence from an Alpha, but the opportunities only a bond could provide, correct?”

Will nodded slowly, eyes narrowing as he flicked them between the doctor’s own.

“I seek a companion with whom to build a life and family, going forward.”

Will shook his head slowly. “I don’t follow.”

Will is an Omega who desires independence, freedom, and the opportunity to be anything but a barefoot-pup-bearing simpering thing. Hannibal is an Alpha who finds his mind curious.

They make a deal: if Will can convince Hannibal before his next heat that he is worth more than breeding stock, *and* can go through his heat without begging for his Alpha, Hannibal will not mate him, but make him a ward instead; Will could go to college, get a job, do anything he wanted.

If not, then he will be Hannibal's mate, bear pups, and accept his role.

But is it really as simple as that?

Notes

For GORGEOUS GRANTY who asked, quite simply, for an arranged marriage AU and then let us run wild.

This is Whiskey's *first ever ABO story!* Awww. The first of many, trust us. We based this one in a world where Omegas can't do anything without express permission from their Alpha - hence no job, no study etc. Not hugely relevant but it does explain why Will is the way he is. There is a chapter or two were something just rubs shoulders with the dubcon warning so we'll be sure to warn for it, but it's very, very slight, we promise no awful things happen between them.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

It wasn't that Will was uncomfortable where he was staying.

The accommodations at the facility were clean and spacious, the food was nutritious and specifically tailored to an Omega's needs. Will even had a caseworker; she had an official title but Will didn't care and didn't ask once he forgot it. She was dealing with his 'case' and that was enough.

Will was uncomfortable because of why he was here.

The place talked itself up as a 'home for the unhomed', as a Godsend for unclaimed Omegas. In reality, it was a glorified dating service, catering to the rich and any whim they had. Everyone had their photo taken, their age and measurements recorded, if they had been at the facility long enough to experience a heat, their temperament throughout was documented as well. Medical history, if known, family lineage, if known, anything they had been on before they'd been 'rescued' - Omegas were only available for viewing and use if they were entirely themselves.

"As nature intended," his case worker told him, flashing a bright smile that showed too many teeth. Will was sure some of them were false.

"Well, nature intends me to bear children, and I would very much rather I didn't. So. I'm already going against what *nature* intends. Be sure to put that in your report."

"There's no need to be melancholy, dear," the case worker continued, as if Will hadn't spoken at all. He noticed she did this a lot. "Even older boys like yourself always find a perfect match here."

Older .

Will was twenty-two, he wasn't exactly queuing up for a retirement check. In fact, he couldn't even get a damn job unless some asshole owned him, so that might not happen anyway.

"Lucky me." he muttered. She tapped her pen briskly against the clipboard.

"Tell me more about yourself, Will, the more open you are in your profile, the more likely we are to find the perfect Alpha for you."

"You don't find Alphas *for* us, you give us to whoever pays the highest price," Will sighed, drawing a hand through his hair. "I don't know what else you want me to say, I'm not changing any of my answers."

"When asked about their hobbies, most people say things like 'reading' or 'painting.' You said 'whiskey.'"

Will shrugged. “It’s important to let people know what they’re getting into.”

The caseworker sighed. “It’s easier to find a match if you make yourself appealing,” she said gently.

“I’m not trying to be appealing, thanks.”

“And with answers like yours,” she continued pointedly, “All you’re likely to attract is a traditionalist who enjoys a challenge. Someone who still holds to discipline as the standard and would happily apply it to you.”

Discipline of an Omega by their Alpha had fallen out of favor, but it was still legal. After all, how could poor, stupid Omegas be expected to make the right decisions without an Alpha to guide them?

Perhaps she’d been intending to shock him, but Will knew exactly what he was in for when he’d been picked up off the streets. He bared his teeth, his grin malicious. “They can certainly *try* .”

The woman who met Hannibal in the lobby was a nervous, twitchy little thing. She seemed uncertain from the moment she opened his file, reading over his selection with a steadily growing aura of discomfort.

“Doctor Lecter,” she began, “Were you given the full selection of our Omegas? We have over two dozen boys currently housed in this facility, I’m sure we could find you someone more suited to your needs.”

“I’ve looked through every file,” he said pleasantly, “I’m certain this is the one I’d like to take home.”

“You have to understand, Doctor Lecter, Will is… Well he’s… He’s not typical for an Omega of his age.”

“Is he fertile?”

“Yes, of course, we noted the results of his last heat in the file.”

“Then I see no reason why I should change my selection.”

“Doctor, if I may,” she closed the file and pressed it to her chest, expression one of genuine distress. “He is uneducated. He came to us through a rescue organization, he has not had the proper etiquette -”

“Uneducated and untrained are rather different things, I would think,” Hannibal replied, his smile icy. “I am entirely aware of the background you have provided for him, I have considered his records in a professional capacity and I will have him, please. If you would be so kind.”

For a moment, it looked as though the Beta would actually try to challenge him again. But whatever she had thought to say she swallowed instead, and left Hannibal with a false little smile as she went to get Will from the waiting room.

The process was similar to adoption, an Alpha would choose their Omega from the catalog available, visit with them at the facility before taking them home. It was rare, very rare, that pairs were not made the same day, but it did happen. Hence the new policy of facility meetings, to avoid stress to both the Omega and the Alpha who claimed them.

When the door opened again, the Beta was back, and she stood aside to let Will through before her. He looked more exquisite than his picture suggested; he had scowled at the camera, where all the others had smiled brightly or tucked their chins with a submissive glance. Curls too long and far too wild, eyes piercing and light. Will's jaw was tense, his pulse humming in his throat as he approached.

He wore the standard issue uniform of the facility, comfortably loose pants and shirt, but he had untucked it from his belt, shoved his hands into his pockets. Aiming, it would seem, to appear as unappealing as possible in his presentation.

Before Hannibal had even breathed him in, he knew he was perfect.

"Will," the woman said, as gentle and cautious as she might have been with a child, "This is Doctor Lecter."

Will took Hannibal in, a slow, displeased look from head to toe. To Hannibal's amusement, he appeared to be breathing through his mouth, as though avoiding Hannibal's scent would protect him entirely from Alpha pheromones.

"Oh," Will said, "Are we doing names, now?"

"Will," The woman said sternly. Will rolled his eyes.

"All day you've been working them up with 'Alpha this' and 'Alpha that.' You do it every time someone makes an appointment. Sometimes I think they're even less of a person to you than we are."

"Will!"

Irreverent, almost childishly rude. Hannibal would need to instill a better sense of manners, but the vibrancy, the independence, those were admirable qualities. Hannibal had neither the time nor the inclination to play babysitter to some needy little thing.

"You could at least *pretend* to take this seriously," the woman lectured, "I'm well aware that you've already had your privileges restricted *twice* this week."

Hannibal stood from his chair. "I don't believe a further meeting will be necessary," he said.

The woman went very pink. Will's shoulders relaxed. He smelled like relief and the tail end of a heat cycle, the intoxicating scent of a soothed Omega.

It was a pity, then, that his scent immediately went bitter when Hannibal continued. “I’d like to take Will home today. Shall we start on the paperwork?”

Will’s expression really was lovely in his anger and confusion. Those beautiful lips parted so wide, tongue soft just against his bottom teeth. It was a picture Hannibal wanted to see repeated, wanted that boy’s mouth for all sorts of beautiful uses once he was tamed. As Hannibal passed him, he breathed in, head turned to be deliberately nearer, and watched Will tense up and stand stock still.

Wild thing, anger dulling his sweetness with a spicy overtone that was delectable. Hannibal graced him with a look before moving past towards the Beta, who fumbled trying to find a pen in her blouse pocket.

Will watched, livid, but stood where he was. Running wouldn’t do him any good. They found him when he hadn’t been running, they would certainly find him if he tried to. Besides, he hadn’t the energy. He’d been exhausted with the entire process of ‘putting himself out there’, had hated the fact that someone had actually chosen his file, and now, *now* …

He glared at Doctor Lecter’s back and refused to breathe his scent in. He could taste it clinging cloying to the back of his throat and hated that his body responded; turning his way, ducking his head, easing his tension into something passive.

He wasn’t passive. He was anything but *passive* .

He made a sound of deep displeasure when the Beta came up to him to scan his microchip with a hand-held machine, logging him into the governmental database of claimed Omegas. Will had been told it was for his own safety and well-being when they’d implanted it against his will, but he knew better. It was to track him, to bring him back if he ran away like a bad boy.

If he knew where the hell it was he would chew it out of himself.

All things signed, Dr. Lecter picked up his coat from the chair he’d sat in and moved to stand before Will. “Shall we?”

“Do I have a choice?”

“Certainly,” the doctor’s eyes narrowed. “The passenger seat of the car or trailing behind it on foot.”

Will’s lip curled, teeth bared. He didn’t have a coat, because that might have encouraged those who were a flight risk. He didn’t have belongings, because he’d barely been able to afford food, and now anything he used was owned by the facility. He was the complete package, ready to go, unable to delay.

The secretary was openly gawking when they walked by. It was annoying, but Will couldn’t entirely blame her. *He* hadn’t thought he’d be claimed either.

The doctor's car was unfairly nice. Will couldn't even appreciate it, because the doors closed and sealed him in with lungfuls of Alpha.

His body wanted to be soothed by the scent. There was an instinct buried deep inside of him that wanted to *bathe* in it, that screamed *finally!* Will glowered out the window, body pressed against it to give himself as much space as possible between himself and the Alpha. "If you touch me," he growled as they pulled away, "I'll kill you."

The doctor gave him a look, one Will caught in the reflection of the glass he was pressed against, before turning on the car. Then the window Will was leaning against opened, near-silent, and he was offered fresh air as the car peeled away from the curb.

"That is quite a promise to make," he said, watching Will's jaw tense in blatant displeasure. "To a man who only wants the best for you."

"You don't want the *best* for me, you don't even know me." Will hissed, glaring over his shoulder. "You saw a photo on a website and *bought* me."

"I could have let you stay," Hannibal agreed. "To grow older, unmated. Every heat more and more painful, year by year."

"Oh so this is mercy?" Will scoffed. "You all talk yourselves up so much, don't you, convince yourselves that you're our only reason for living, that without you we couldn't do anything at all."

"You can't," Hannibal pointed out calmly.

"Well I did," Will spat back. "Before you, and I will again after."

"You are a curious thing, Will."

"Bully for me."

To Will's surprise, the Alpha didn't try to speak to him again as they drove, and he didn't close the window. Will shoved his head through it and breathed in the fumes of passing cars, the stink of an open sewer somewhere, the smells of the city in general. A city he wouldn't be able to explore again without *permission* .

God, why hadn't he just *not* presented in his teens? His life would have remained mundane and dull and just how he wanted it.

They drove for a while, until the city became suburbs and apartment buildings became squat, enormous homes. Will tried not to be impressed, but it was difficult. He'd never had this kind of money growing up, he'd never see this kind of money on his own. He wasn't jealous so much as sad. Sad that the only reason he was even allowed here was because he was owned by someone, because he was a thing to be bred, to be used to pop out pups on the regular, and keep house, and be a pathetic simpering little thing forever.

The drive the doctor pulled his car into hosted a striking house with an attached garage. Two floors. Will caught sight of well-manicured lawns before the garage swallowed them and his

window was pulled up again, slow enough to allow him time to jerk his head back into the car before being choked by it.

Pity.

“Come along, Will,”

Like a dog called to heel. Will followed Hannibal with barely concealed disgust. He wasn’t so much larger. Older, perhaps, more experienced, but Will was nearly of height with him. If he had to, he was sure he could defend himself, fight tooth and nail and claw his way out.

Hannibal led him into a kitchen that would not have been out of place on television. Marble counter tops, shiny chrome appliances. It looked like no one had ever touched it.

From the kitchen into the hall, and then into a study, with bookshelves to the ceiling and a tempting fireplace. Will felt chilled in his facility uniform.

Hannibal sorted through a large cabinet and returned with two glasses and a bottle of expensive whiskey. He poured a generous amount into the first glass and held it out to Will, who stared in disbelief.

“I *did* read your file,” Hannibal told him. Will snatched the glass from his hands. Hopefully, he would be more tolerable if Will was tipsy.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow. “Manners, Will. There are a few things I won’t tolerate in this household.”

“Yeah is there anything you *will* tolerate?” Will mumbled. After a moment he sighed, eyes to the ceiling in frustration. “Thank you.”

The doctor inclined his head, kept his eyes on Will as the other took a sip and savored the burn of the alcohol against his tongue.

“Honesty,” Hannibal answered him. “Curiosity. You are free to do what you wish, in this house. Within reason, of course. You live here too, after all.”

Will snorted softly and cradled the glass. “What, no breeding bench in a cold dark room for me? The whole house instead?”

“I could arrange those accommodations, of course, if that’s your preference,” Hannibal’s smile reached his eyes and Will looked away, refusing to be charmed by it. “Personally, I find such things archaic.”

“Is there anything that leaves your mouth that’s truthful?”

“I’ve not lied to you once, Will,” the doctor pointed out, taking a step nearer and humming, amused, when Will stepped back. “I will endeavor to remain open to you. Within reason.”

“Did you buy me to breed?” Will asked, taking another deliberate sip of his whiskey. It was good, and he would have loved to drink himself stupid on it. He probably would, once he got

some answers.

“Among other reasons,” Hannibal replied. “Companionship often goes hand in hand with bonding.”

Will snorted and took a larger sip, enough to burn his throat and nearly choke him, but not enough to still his tongue. “I have no interest in the sort of companionship you offer.”

“Your file said that you enjoy literature and non-fiction. Perhaps we could start there and eventually work our way to common ground.”

Will’s brow furrowed. “I didn’t tell them that.”

“Every file contains a page of observations. People are rarely honest with themselves or others about their own lives.” Hannibal looked smug, as if he’d won something by taking Will off-guard. As if a few lines of text on a page could have told him anything about Will.

“Manners, books, and fucking,” Will drawled, “and all I have to do is give up everything. What a lucky boy I am.”

“What is it you feel you would be giving up?” Hannibal asked him, and Will realized he was genuinely curious. This was not the sneering question of the intake staff, this wasn’t the wide-eyed disbelief of the younger Omegas he’d shared his space with. Whatever else this man was, for the short time Will had been in his presence he had been honest.

Will finished his drink and winced, baring his teeth for a moment.

“Independence,” Will shrugged. “The chance to go to college, maybe, actually learn something. The chance to get a job that isn’t housework and service.”

“I would hardly stand in the way of an education.”

Will snorted. “You’d let an Omega attend college?”

“It doesn’t matter how one presents, if they have the mind for study it should be indulged.” Hannibal replied, reaching for Will’s empty glass. Will hesitated a moment before handing it over, careful to keep his fingers from touching Hannibal’s. “If that was all, I don’t see why we can’t come to a compromise, Will.”

“That’s not all.” Will replied, but when Hannibal looked askance, Will found himself going quiet. He didn’t know what else to say. He just didn’t want to be *someone’s* property. He didn’t want to be referred to as *the doctor’s* Omega, he didn’t want to be claimed for all to see, he didn’t want to go mad with lust during his heat and beg for a knot like something mindless.

Though his heats had been getting harder and harder to bear alone since he first presented.

Will swallowed. “I don’t want to be bred,” he said. “I have no desire to bear pups. I doubt we can compromise on that, since it’s the reason, sorry, *among other reasons* , that you bought me.”

“Regrettable,” Hannibal said softly, “since it doesn’t seem you have many other options available to you.”

Will flinched. “I was doing *just fine* ,” He snarled.

“Surviving and thriving are different things.” Stepping much too close, Hannibal handed him another glass of whiskey. Will stepped back with it, until his back hit a bookshelf.

“If survival is all I’ll have, I’ll still take it,” he said.

“You’ve truly never wanted children?” Hannibal asked. “It’s unusual, for an Omega, but not unheard of.”

A gnawing yearning tugged at Will’s stomach, as it always had. He was not immune to his instincts. He was not immune to fantasy, no matter how valid and pointless it seemed. Life as an insipid house Omega was a living nightmare, but *parenting* … If Will could have had one without the other, he would have thrown himself at an Alpha years ago.

“It doesn’t matter what I want,” he said, swallowing a large gulp of whiskey, “breeding changes people.” Alphas were never the same after they’d gotten what they wanted. “And I won’t raise a child in a household where “mommy” isn’t valued.”

The doctor considered him for a moment, an earnest and curious gaze that made Will tuck his nose into his glass to avoid instinctively breathing in the Alpha’s scent. But surprisingly the man didn’t come nearer, didn’t immediately - as Will had expected - try to catch and coax him. He was still shocked he’d been offered whiskey from the same bottle the doctor was drinking from, and not one filled with drugs that would render him incapable of fighting back.

He didn’t want to be here, but at least this wasn’t the absolute worst place he could be.

“Are you a gambling man, Will?”

Will blinked. “I’ve never had the time or means.”

“You have both now,” Hannibal spread a palm at his side, a strangely welcoming gesture. “You seek independence from an Alpha, but the opportunities only a bond could provide, correct?”

Will nodded slowly, eyes narrowing as he flicked them between the doctor’s own.

“I seek a companion with whom to build a life and family, going forward.”

Will shook his head slowly. “I don’t follow.”

“You have recently gone through a heat, yes?” Will nodded. “So you are, perhaps, three cycles away from another. In that time, I’d like you to convince me that your independence is worth my patronage. Convince me that your worth, to me, is intellectual, not sexual. If you can do that, if you can go through your heat around an Alpha and not succumb to your most

base instincts, then I will not force a bond on you. I will keep you as my charge, and allow you the freedoms you seek."

Will swallowed, the possibilities, the opportunities thick in his throat. "And if I don't?"

Hannibal just blinked, head tilting to the side in a strangely endearing gesture. "Then I will be here to ease your heat, and bond you as my mate."

Just barely off his heat, the idea twisted low in Will's belly and tried to tug at him. As far as Will was concerned, that would be the hardest part of all of this. But he had never begged for assistance before, and he wouldn't now. He could debate with Hannibal or whatever he wanted as "proof," and he could get himself a knotted dildo for the heat. It was doable.

More importantly, it was the only option available.

"Alright," Will said, swallowing around a lump in his throat, a moment of worry niggling at him. "I guess it's a bet, then."

Hannibal flashed him a smile, a look that seemed as much for show as anything else, part of his portrayal as 'winsome psychiatrist.' "Excellent. Now, you'll be pleased to know that I've no interest in micromanaging you, however, I do have some conditions for your stay here. Particularly if I'm going to be offering you as much as I have."

There it was. There was always a catch. "What conditions?" Will asked warily.

"Merely that you follow proper rules of conduct for someone in your position," Hannibal replied. "I'm aware that you have not been educated in proper Omega etiquette, but you are not a stupid man, Will. If you do not overstep the freedoms I've given you, we will not have a problem."

Will frowned. "A little specificity, doctor, would be greatly appreciated."

Hannibal's smile was a little less warm this time. "You will show a proper level of respect towards myself and any of my peers that I may host at my home. I do not expect simpering, but I have a reputation in personal and professional circles that I will maintain by any means necessary."

Do not speak unless spoken to, do not interrupt, do not attempt to assert yourself over any Alpha present, regardless of protection offered by a claim .

Will swallowed. "And if I were to misstep?"

"A misstep can be moved on from," Hannibal replied, "learned from, with appropriate consequences. I will make allowance for your lack of education, but only twice. Should you decide to push the matter further, and test my patience, I will not hesitate to return you to the facility."

Where Will would once again be sold to the first Alpha to come sniffing about, where he would not get even the small chance he'd been given. Where more things might have

‘consequences’ than just embarrassing his Alpha in front of company. Where everything Will *was* might have a consequence.

Or worse. A returned Omega may well have been garbage. And there’d be no proving his ‘virtue,’ either, whether the doctor touched him or not.

A returned Omega could hope for very little in terms of price, and therefore far less inspection from their case worker in regards to what kind of Alpha bought them. There were horror stories of Omegas bought for brothels, for trafficking. Bred out to the highest bidder.

The breeding bench in the cold, dark room. Will downed the last of his whiskey. He felt overly warm, but it had not done enough to dull his senses.

“It won’t be a problem,” he ground out.

Hannibal’s scent was pleased. Worse, it was *pleasant.* Will needed to be far away from him before he wrapped around the last bit of Will that ran entirely on instinct.

“I’m certain it won’t,” Hannibal agreed. “It is in our best interests, for each other, to make this work.” Hannibal set his unfinished whiskey to a small side table and clasped his hands together.

“There are several hours before dinner. I’ve prepared a spare room for you, Will, and purchased you some clothes based on your measurements. I hope it’s to your taste, but you’re welcome to make the room comfortable as you need it to be. It is the first on the right at the top of the stairs.”

Will nodded stiffly. For some reason he hadn’t expected to be given a room of his own, clothes of his own, a space to escape to. But Hannibal hadn’t lied to him, yet, and he didn’t seem to be malicious in his offer now.

“Thank you.”

“I’m afraid I’ve yet to learn your personal style, but I would be happy to purchase what you prefer at a later date.”

“I’m sure it will be fine,” Will drew a hand against the back of his neck. When he chanced a glance at the Alpha again, Hannibal was watching him patiently. “Is it alright if I -”

“The house *is* yours, Will,” Hannibal reminded him. “Please explore it at your leisure. I will find you when it’s time for dinner.”

He would find him. By smell, by sense, by predatory grace. He would find Will even if Will did not want to be found. He would find Will because Will was his to find, now, whether Will liked it or not. But Will felt freer, stepping past the Alpha, than when he’d been guided into his car. They had reached some sort of mutual understanding, one that allowed Will more agency than he’d ever had in his life.

He turned at the door and looked back. “Thank you, Doctor.”

“Hannibal,” the other replied easily, bending to take both of their glasses up with one hand. “My name is Hannibal. You’re welcome to call me that.”

Will didn’t. But he felt the name warm him as he made his way upstairs.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> *It could be so easy for Hannibal. Will knew that, even though he tried to keep himself stubborn and strong. Will was touch starved and unmated longer than most of his peers. Hannibal could ply his instincts with wine and soft touches and Will wasn't entirely sure how long he could hold off.*
>
> *But he didn't. He kept his word. He gave Will his space. He gave Will a* headache.

Despite the challenge and the three month time limit, Will was a ghost in the house over the first few days. He appeared at mealtimes, silent and withdrawn, contemplative. Beyond that, he was consistently just out of sight. Hannibal would enter a room to find the faintest traces of Will's scent, as if he'd beaten a hasty retreat the moment he sensed Hannibal coming.

Hannibal allowed the sullen grace period. After a few days of caution, Will finally came to the conclusion that Hannibal was not about to forcibly mount him in the hallway if he lingered too long, and he began to actually enjoy the features Hannibal's home had to offer.

Hannibal didn't bother with televisions, but he had a decently stocked library in his study, as well as a harpsichord if Will was musically inclined. He would have been willing to provide other options for Will's entertainment or betterment, but some time around the fourth day, Will discovered his books on psychology and did not emerge for several days after that.

Hannibal found it endearing. Will's other senses were dulled when he was lost in a book. Hannibal could linger in the doorway, watching his look of concentration, without fear of Will scenting him and fleeing.

Will truly was a beautiful creature, features strong and classically elegant. A little rough around the edges, but nothing a good haircut and a shave couldn't fix. If he didn't up and run in the night, and Hannibal was still not entirely certain he wouldn't, he would bear beautiful pups.

Will, for his part, found that he was settling in despite his best attempts to appear aloof and indifferent. The clothes Hannibal had bought him were pristine and almost tailored, the way they sat against him. Several pairs of dark slacks, comfortable button downs both long and short sleeved. The colours were dull but that hardly mattered; it wasn't as though Will was going anywhere he could be seen.

Dinners, too, were a strangely friendly affairs. The doctor cooked his own meals, Will was surprised to learn, and did use the kitchen that looked right out of a showhome. He presented Will with every kind of meat, a selection of vegetables, rice, polenta and buckwheat, fresh

fruits, desserts made from chocolate and cream and delicate sugar shells that Will could crack with a spoon.

He felt spoilt, and he hadn't done anything - in his mind - to deserve it. Hannibal hadn't tried to coax Will into closeness, he hadn't cornered or threatened him. He was, in fact, very pleasant to him. Caring. Nurturing. *Alpha* .

Will's stomach coiled with warmth once in a while, instincts impatient to burst forth from behind his stubborn exterior and cling to the man, aching, *begging* to be bonded to such a provider.

But Will was stubborn, he always had been. It was that which had pushed him to find work, boring, repetitive, low paying work but *work* , before he'd been 'rescued'. It was what drove him to survive. But he could be stubborn without being rude. He could be stubborn without losing his chance of an independent, better life.

So one morning he got up earlier, early enough to set the coffee machine running before Hannibal could, early enough that when the doctor came downstairs, Will held out a steaming cup for him with a small smile.

"Good morning,"

Hannibal looked pleasantly surprised, though not as surprised as Will might have liked. He took the coffee with a murmur of thanks, drinking it black like Will drank his own.

“I thought we could talk this morning?” Will suggested. “You know more about me than I do about you. They don’t give the Omegas files.”

“A shame. It might reduce hesitancy and discomfort.”

“In certain Omegas,” Will agreed reluctantly. For *him* , it would only have fueled his anger. A list of characteristics for a man he didn’t have the option to deny.

“Well,” Hannibal said, passing just a shade too close to Will to get to the fridge, “If we’re going to have a discussion, perhaps you could also assist with breakfast?”

Will found himself with a sudden and unexpected lungful of *Alpha* . Virile and strong, it appealed to the anxiousness that had been brewing in Will for days. “Yeah, sure,” he said, the answer spilling from him before he could process the question.

God, was he really that pathetically lonely that he’d find himself submitting to the first half-decent Alpha to look his way?

“Would you prefer a hot breakfast?”

Will blinked for a moment thrown, before shaking his head. “I honestly don’t mind. Whatever you’re making.”

Hannibal regarded the contents of his fridge before deciding something with a quiet hum and taking out the ingredients needed. Bread, milk, butter, a couple of eggs. From the pantry he

took sugar and cinnamon.

“What would you like to know, Will?” Hannibal asked him, taking up his cup to sip from. “I’m an open book.”

Will snorted but found to his surprise and unwelcome pleasure that the doctor smiled back, just a narrowing of the eyes over the rim of his coffee cup. Will licked his lips and fiddled with his own until Hannibal passed him the bread to slice.

“Where are you from?” He asked, and immediately cringed. “Not to suggest you’re not from here, just, your accent -”

“Where would you guess?” Hannibal replied. “No wrong answers, Will, consider me as curious as you are.”

“I uh… I mean I haven’t had much experience with anyone outside of anywhere really,” Will mumbled, eyes focusing on the way Hannibal’s hands moved as he poured milk into a bowl before deftly cracking the eggs into it one-handed. “Europe. Eastern Europe? The way you curl your consonants there’s… they sound less… hollow than ours do.” Will finished dumbly.

Hannibal blinked at him, brows up in pleased surprise. “Lithuania,” he offered finally. “Though I have lived in many countries. Have you studied linguistics before, Will?”

“I haven’t studied anything,” Will shrugged. “I just like to read. It would be interesting to listen to some of the sounds in the phonetic alphabet. I tried to learn it once, just to counter the boredom.”

“Remarkable boy,” Hannibal told him, and the praise went right to Will’s spine, straightening it with a fissure of pleasure. He hated and loved that his response was so immediate, he hated and loved that when Hannibal stepped nearer - entirely within his right, as he reached for a heavy skillet - Will breathed him in to soothe himself further.

“Why did you move? To America, I mean.”

Hannibal was quiet. There was something hard in his face, something that made Will want to soothe him, but he didn’t seem to be directing that quiet ire towards Will.

“I lost most of my family when I was very young,” he finally said, “too young. I had not even presented yet when my parents and younger sister were killed.”

Will drew in a soft breath. Hannibal shook his head.

“I ask that you please not offer your sympathies. It’s easier for me to discuss it without bringing emotion into it.” He took a breath of his own, reaching for the plate of bread Will had sliced. “I was taken in by my uncle and his wife in Paris. From there I developed a love of study and language. After university, I took a year to explore Italy, and then applied to medical school in America. My uncle and I were never close. It seemed more practical to stay here.”

Will didn't know what to say for a moment. There was the immediate instinct to reach out, to comfort, to distract his - not *his* - Alpha from the memories and pain. But Will could also feel the way Hannibal held himself against that, as though he was fighting similar instincts. So Will said nothing. He just watched Hannibal add the cinnamon to the milk and egg mixture and dip the bread in before setting it to the skillet where it spat and sizzled.

"How many languages do you speak?" Will asked after a while. The Alpha's lips relaxed a little from their tension.

"Four, fluently. Five if we include a language I can understand and speak, but not write or read in."

Will whistled lowly, impressed. Hannibal glanced at him and he felt a sudden urge to tell the man everything, to answer all his questions if he had any, much more honestly than he had answered the stupid questionnaire.

"Do you speak another?"

"Some bastardized version of French, I suppose," Will shrugged. "Ma spoke Cajun French for a while, I guess I picked some of it up."

"Would you want to learn more?"

Will took a breath and held it a moment, pensive. "I don't know," he admitted. "I don't think I'd have the aptitude for it."

Hannibal turned the French toast to allow the other side to brown up. He sprinkled sugar over the crispy side to caramelize and reached for another piece of bread to start the process again.

"I suspect you have the aptitude for more than you think you do. The social workers from the facility found you to be bright. 'Too bright for his own good,' if I recall. I think they found you intimidating." Hannibal looked amused when he met Will's gaze.

"Good," Will said bitterly, "I was trying to be."

"They would not have known what to do with you."

"Do you?"

They both paused, Will in humiliation, Hannibal in contemplation.

"You are under stimulated," Hannibal said finally, plating a thick slice of French toast. "Far too intelligent for needlepoint or whatever it is they teach in Omega schools these days."

"Certainly not *needlepoint* ," Will said with a snort. Omegas were largely oppressed, but they were still long past the 19th century.

"You need to be challenged," Hannibal continued. "You require intellectual stimulation. Online classes, perhaps. And," he added, with a slightly more serious expression, "You need care. No one, Alpha, Beta, or Omega, can exist entirely on their own."

Will swallowed, could feel himself frowning, could feel his mouth about to run loose with sarcasm and denial while the instinct in his entire being screamed to be cared for and coddled. He took a deep breath instead, and the plate Hannibal offered him, and said nothing.

“There are conserves in the pantry,” Hannibal told him, “should you like them. Or syrup. I could always caramelize some apples.”

“No, this, this is fine, thank you. More than fine.”

He held his plate dumbly for a moment, as Hannibal turned another piece of toast in the pan and rinsed his fingers under the tap. Will watched the way he flicked water from the tips of them, watched how elegantly they curled in the dish towel as Hannibal wiped them dry. He swallowed again, licking his lips, and ducked his head.

“Would you let me do that?” He asked carefully. “I mean, I remember our arrangement, I won’t - I don’t like taking things I haven’t earned but… I like learning.”

“I think it would do you good to discover more about yourself,” Hannibal replied, calm as ever. “When we go to purchase you some more clothes, we’ll be sure to stop over to get a laptop and a phone for you. Self-directed learning doesn’t seem to be something you struggle with.”

“I -” Will didn’t know what to say. He would have been happy to use whatever Hannibal already had in his home, he didn’t *need* things bought for him, he felt indebted already that he was wearing something comfortable and warm and had a bed to sleep in that he didn’t have to share.

“Breakfast,” Hannibal reminded him gently, once he’d plated a piece of toast for himself. “At the table or the bar, as you like, but you must eat.”

Will sat at the bar and ate, allowing himself to enjoy the texture and sweetness of the toast, allowing himself to enjoy the fact that Hannibal was near enough without hovering as he ate his own breakfast, and drank the coffee Will had made him.

Hannibal had not been joking when he’d told Will they would get him new things. It seemed Hannibal rarely joked about anything to do with Will and his well-being.

Two weeks into their time together, Hannibal took Will with him on a shopping trip, all but setting him loose in the clothing department while he sought out electronics. The freedom was strange, almost overwhelming, as though it were a test to see if Will would run given the first opportunity.

He didn’t.

He’d be caught, anyway.

Instead, he found himself stroking his fingers over soft flannel shirts and distressed jeans, clothes he’d always wanted and could never afford or justify to himself.

It seemed like a trick or a trap. Will had no money, no credit, no job. He was entirely dependent on Hannibal, whether he liked it or not.

By the time Hannibal returned nearly forty minutes later, Will had a single shirt in his hands and a look of overwhelmed distress on his face.

The shirt was a bland white button down, a match for several he already had in his closet. Hannibal frowned when he saw it, deftly plucking it from his fingers.

“Skipping over your own desires in favor of what you suspect will please me is unlike you, Will.”

Will flushed, no doubt an unflattering shade of pink, and turned his head away. “I thought…” saying it out loud only made him feel stupid.

“You thought, perhaps, that I would be less likely to purchase things more to your taste than mine?”

Will said nothing, turning instead to pretend to examine a rack full of sweaters. It had been exactly what he thought.

“I would like you to get things you would feel comfortable in,” Hannibal reminded him. “The only time I would interfere with a clothing choice would be when it is inappropriate for going out in or hosting guests.”

Will chewed his lip a little harder, knowing that if he kept worrying it he would bite through it. In the end he sighed and nodded stiffly, returning to the soft flannel and jeans to grab up one of each in his size. When Hannibal cocked an eyebrow Will huffed a breath and added another of each to his arms. The Alpha seemed pleased enough to let Will alone on the matter and instead summoned him to join him in electronics.

“I have some models to suggest to you,” Hannibal said, “but the choice is ultimately yours in which you require.”

Will’s eyes widened. He’d never had money for such things, he’d always used the computers in the public library. Seeing the suggestions that Hannibal made put Will’s mind into a tailspin. Laptops with hours-long battery life so he could work outside if he wanted, laptops with the graphics capacity for games, should he choose to play, laptops of different colors and designs to fit his fancy.

Will had no idea what to do.

In the end, he chose a sleek and simple laptop for its battery life, blushing furiously when Hannibal added hundreds of dollars worth of software to buy alongside it. When it came to phones, however, Will shook his head, dumbfounded.

“I’ve never had one,” he admitted. “I’ve never had the need. Who am I going to call?”

“Myself, for one, should you be running late one day.”

Will turned towards Hannibal, his eyes wide, his mouth slightly open on a sentence that would not come.

For once, Hannibal did not seem to have a response at the ready. His brow creased as he stared at Will. “I would imagine you would eventually need to take some classes outside of the house,” he ventured, “and while I’ve taken some vacation time for us to adjust to each other, I will eventually need to return to work. I would not expect you to sit around waiting for me to come home.”

Will had expected, perhaps, the grocery store, if he was “good” enough to earn it. Claimed Omegas were legally free to go wherever they pleased, but some Alphas were more restrictive than others. Many didn’t allow their Omegas out alone at all.

“I don’t have anywhere to go,” Will found himself saying. Hannibal continued to give him that uncertain stare, and then turned to a hovering employee to indicate a specific model.

“I’m certain that will change. We’ll try this one.”

Will was overwhelmed when they got into the car, bags and bags of things in the trunk *for him* - Hannibal had bought a few things for himself but nothing even close to how much he had splurged on Will. Will sat with his hands between his knees, one foot jiggling in distress as they drove, and Hannibal slid open the window for him.

Will thought he was going to cry.

What could he say? What could he possibly say to this? Surely this was the moment they came home and the Alpha demanded his due payment, surely this was the moment that Will’s life was over because he’d allowed someone to ply him with gifts.

The Alpha didn’t speak as he drove them home, and he helped Will carry the new purchases into the house but didn’t enter Will’s room to deposit them there. When Will looked askance, his eyes so beautifully wide, and face flushed with resigned acceptance, it took a lot of willpower for Hannibal not to reach out to comfort him.

He had chosen Will for his independence and fire, he had chosen him because unlike the other Omegas on the facility website Will had stared directly into the camera and challenged someone to choose him. He had chosen Will because he was beautiful and interesting and not trained into blind obedience.

He relished the challenge of winning his mate, not being handed one. He had given Will a task, and had found that he himself had to bend to make the process fair. So Hannibal would not coax, he would not bribe, and he would not threaten his Omega into submission. He would wait and see if Will came to him on his own.

“I’ll be in the study if you need me,” Hannibal said.

And then he *left.*

He walked away, with Will standing in the doorway of his room, mere feet away from a bed, from a claim.

Will felt suddenly overwhelmed and dizzy. He gathered up his things and hid away in his room, the door closed and locked. *Locked.* He could lock an Alpha out of his room with no consequences. He could take classes. He could have his own laptop, his own phone. He could leave the house. Alone.

Will sank back onto his bed, staring up at the ceiling. None of this made any sense to him. Hannibal was bigger than he was. Better fed, at least until he'd started feeding Will himself. And Will was not entirely immune to his instincts, which Hannibal had to be aware of.

It could be so easy for Hannibal. Will knew that, even though he tried to keep himself stubborn and strong. Will was touch starved and unmated longer than most of his peers. Hannibal could ply his instincts with wine and soft touches and Will wasn't entirely sure how long he could hold off.

But he didn't. He kept his word. He gave Will his space. He gave Will a *headache.*

By the time Will came down for dinner, he had set up his computer as best he could, and had fallen into a vortex of researching new and interesting things. Things he'd never thought he would be allowed to read about or know, things he hadn't even heard of before that branched out from some of his initial tastes.

When he saw Hannibal, he couldn't help but smile at him, a genuine and bright thing that reach his eyes. He ducked his head in both greeting and gratitude and moved to start setting the table. He found himself, almost against his will, talking to Hannibal as he worked. Telling him about finding a page that vocalized the IPA for him, about how Will had tried to recreate certain sounds and had been unable, about the possibilities of studying languages and linguistics that had never occurred to Will before.

And Hannibal listened, he listened and gave his input when Will asked, suggested when Will floundered. It was almost comfortable, almost as though they were *friends* rather than precariously teetering on the edge of their instincts.

They ate in amicable silence. Hannibal offered Will a nightcap that he refused, but the refusal didn't taste like ash in his mouth this time, and they went their separate ways at the top of the stairs; Will to his bedroom and Hannibal to his own, just down the hall.

Will stood for a good while just leaning against his door, allowing himself to feel his instincts claw at his belly and try to push his feet to motion to follow his Alpha. He didn't, of course, but he indulged in a brief fantasy of a romantic and mutual joining, enough that his body felt overheated, his cock twitched between his legs. Enough that Will, for the first time in a long time, wanted to pleasure himself for *him* , and not because his body demanded he do it.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> *“I did not claim you for you to be meek, Will. You have your own voice. You are welcome to speak for yourself. But be wise in remembering your place when you do.”*
>
> *It wasn’t a threat, but Will tensed anyway. How could he remember his place and speak for himself? What was he supposed to say? For the first time in his entire adult life, Will was annoyed that he’d never gone to a finishing school. He didn’t even know if there was a greeting he needed to give, should someone approach him. He didn’t know what he was supposed to do.*
>
> *“Come,” Hannibal coaxed finally, reaching but not touching, to offer his palm to Will. “You look very handsome this evening. Allow yourself pride in that, if not in anything else.”*
>
> Hannibal throws a dinner party... and things go about as expected. A tiny bit of angst, a tiny bit of punishment... but we're only on ch4 ;)

Hannibal had forewarned Will that he would be hosting a dinner, and that Will’s presence would be required. Will hadn’t argued so much as gently worried.

“I’ll make a fool of myself, can’t I pretend I’m ill?” he muttered. Gently.

“I have no intention of putting you into a situation where you will embarrass yourself, Will, but as my Omega you will be at my side for the duration.”

My Omega . Some days Will could almost forget that was what he was, in the end. Some days, when Hannibal left Will alone at home to study or browse the internet to his heart’s content. Some days, when Will helped with dinner and they enjoyed it together. Some days. Not today.

“A dinner surrounded by Alphas is a situation where I would embarrass myself,” Will replied tersely, but he was panicking, he was nervous. He hated that he was nervous.

“You will dress, and eat dinner, and stay at my side. You needn’t speak if it worries you, but I won’t hold you to silence.” Hannibal raised a brow, waiting.

Either was a problem. Be silent and he implied that he was the sort of dainty Omega who sat quietly waiting for his Alpha’s instructions. Speak and he was bound to say something stupid.

Disregard Hannibal and lock himself in his room, and he would ruin everything.

When the first of the guests arrived, Will was dressed, his hair combed as neatly as he could manage, and hiding in the kitchen.

He was fortunate that Hannibal was not the sort of Alpha to dress his Omega in more ‘dainty’ and ‘delicate’ things. Will had a jacket and tie, specifically chosen for these sorts of events. The collar was high enough to hide the join between his neck and shoulder, where a claiming bite would traditionally go, though Will had seen higher. It would hopefully minimize commentary on their bond, though Will was doubtful.

It would be assumed that they’d bonded. That Hannibal had fucked and claimed him. That Will was sweet and obedient and *fertile* .

But Will would *smell* unbonded. Any Alpha in the room would know, and Will couldn’t decide if that commentary would be worse.

If anyone offered to buy him off Hannibal, he was going to scream.

He brought his hand up to his mouth to thoughtlessly chew at the side of his nail and jerked his hand away in panic when someone said his name. Hannibal stood in the doorway, dressed impeccably, poised like a prince. He raised an eyebrow and Will took a deep breath, nodding quickly and stepping nearer.

“You need only be present,” Hannibal reminded him, though he didn’t reach out to touch, or soothe the panic from the trembling thing next to him. He’d never seen Will so overcome with worry, even the day he’d brought him home Will had radiated rage, not fear. The urge to comfort him was growing impossible to ignore, and Hannibal held his breath a moment.

“I did not claim you for you to be meek, Will. You have your own voice. You are welcome to speak for yourself. But be wise in remembering your place when you do.”

It wasn’t a threat, but Will tensed anyway. How could he remember his place and speak for himself? What was he supposed to say? For the first time in his entire adult life, Will was annoyed that he’d never gone to a finishing school. He didn’t even know if there was a greeting he needed to give, should someone approach him. He didn’t know what he was supposed to *do* .

“Come,” Hannibal coaxed finally, reaching but not touching, to offer his palm to Will. “You look very handsome this evening. Allow yourself pride in that, if not in anything else.”

Will didn’t take his hand, but he did grudgingly follow Hannibal out into the dining room and through to the living room where about a dozen people were standing about, talking. Waiters and waitresses milled between them, offering drinks and canapes, taking empty glasses, keeping their eyes averted. Will straightened his shoulders and followed Hannibal further into the room.

At the beginning, it wasn’t as awful as Will had expected. Hannibal introduced him politely, made no mention of their bond of lack thereof, did not imply any conquests he did not hold. Many of his acquaintances were more than civil, curious about Will’s experience with Doctor

Lecter, his opinion on the food. None of them seemed to expect much of an answer, and when he gave one, smiled politely and returned their gaze to the Alpha at his side.

The wine flowed, however, easy and quick. Will himself snagged a third glass from a passing waiter, and then a fourth, ignoring a pointed look from Hannibal. It was too much for him, unbonded and stuck in a room full of insufferable snobs and peacocking Alphas.

When Hannibal left him for a moment, pulled off by some doctor or another, Will went to hide over by the harpsichord, putting the instrument between himself and the rest of the room. While he was at it, he downed the last of his glass in one long swallow and handed it off to the first waiter he saw, already hunting down a fifth.

“You’re Will, then?”

Will only vaguely recognized the man who approached him. Alpha, a surgeon, a former colleague of Hannibal’s. Will had written him off as obnoxious and pretentious, along with everyone else in the room.

“That’s what it says in my file,” Will replied, bored and irritated. And *thirsty* .

The man leaned forward with his most charming smile. He was radiating pheromones, but even with the lack of a bond, Will had been scenting Hannibal for weeks. Everyone else smelled wrong. He curled his lip.

“You’ve gone a long time without bonding. Doctor Lecter isn’t taking advantage of you, is he, sweetheart?”

“You mean, is he fucking me and leaving me hanging?” Will asked, he crossed his arms over his chest defensively. He didn’t want to be here, he didn’t want to be cornered by a posturing Alpha, he didn’t want to be questioned about his status or relationship, he didn’t *want it* . “He’s doing neither. So. No. I don’t suppose he’s taking advantage.”

The Alpha blinked, eyes rimmed red for a moment and Will immediately looked away. The last thing he needed was a goddamn fight. He should excuse himself, he should go. Hell, he should curl up and play little if it made people get the hell *away* from him.

“He hasn’t touched you? How curious.” The words were neutral, the tone was not. Whatever the man had been thinking upon approach was quickly being replaced by something else, and Will could feel in the back of his mind that tugging voice that told him to shut up just *shut up, Will* . He didn’t listen. He rarely did.

“I’m not sure this is appropriate for dinner conversation,” Will tried, a compromise between his stubbornness and his self preservation.

“Oh, but abuse of an Omega is very relevant,” the man pressed, stepping even closer into Will’s space and he had to physically swallow down the whine that nearly rose from his throat.

“He’s not *abusing* me, he just isn’t *fucking* me,” Will reiterated, tone far too sharp to be polite. “God, you all really do just believe that we’re nothing but a hole to fuck, don’t you? That we’re worth nothing more than how much seed we can hold in our bellies until it takes and we pop out pups for your goddamn reputations.”

The Alpha looked taken aback, his eyes widened, his top lip flickered in rage and Will’s pulse rocketed. He knew he should cower, he knew he should placate and apologize and shut up but he just couldn’t. Maybe he was against nature, maybe he was a freak, it didn’t matter.

“Will,” the sound of Hannibal’s voice *did* summon a whine that Will couldn’t control, and the expression he wore had Will shaking where he stood. It was one thing to offend an Alpha, it was another to jeopardize the reputation of someone who owned him. And he’d been warned, Hannibal had *told* him… “Come here, please.”

Will went, eyes down, neck bared, as meek and placating as he should have been moments before.

“I expect better from you,” Hannibal said, soft and dangerous.

“He-”

“I have no say in what *he* does, distasteful or inappropriate as I may find it. *Your* actions, on the other hand, reflect back on me.”

“Hannibal-”

Hannibal’s hand came down on the back of Will’s neck, heavy, unyielding. Will squirmed under the touch, instinct and logic screaming at him to be still, habit screaming at him to fight.

People were staring. People would always stare at an Omega being chastised, no matter how quiet Hannibal was being about it. Will’s face was red and hot as he stared down at Hannibal’s shoes.

“We discussed this, Will. We spoke about your behavior. There was very little I asked of you, wasn’t there?”

Shame coiled cold in Will’s belly. It mingled nicely with both inebriation and fear. Hannibal had promised consequences. Hannibal had promised the potential of return to the facility. And he’d be *right* to return Will if Will was a risk to his life, his livelihood. If Will made things difficult for him, if Will was cold or cruel.

Will swallowed, hands curling into weak little fists at his sides. He didn’t dare look up or make another sound; whining would do little more than anger Hannibal now. Will refused to look to the man who had instigated this entire affair, as well, certain from what he could smell that he was enjoying this far too much. All of them were.

Perhaps Hannibal had set him up to fail? Perhaps he’d known that this would inevitably happen, had known that Will would fail before he even began, and would use it as an excuse

to return him, an excuse to get out of their bargain before Will had had a chance to earn his independence with it.

Hannibal's fingers tightened incrementally against Will's neck and he hissed. "I'm sorry,"

"Will."

"I'm sorry, Alpha." He had no idea if that was what he meant to say, what he was supposed to say. He was entirely out of his depth. But when Hannibal's grip eased just a little, Will sighed, trembling. Perhaps it was enough.

"Excuse us," Hannibal murmured to his peer, tugging Will just a little closer to him as he led him through the living room, the dining room, out into the hallway. He didn't let Will go then either, though there was no one left to see, and this time Will *did* whine.

"Stupid boy," Hannibal sighed when the reached the study, shoving Will bodily inside and closing the door behind them both. "I asked one thing of you tonight."

"I'm sorry!" Will's voice pitched, some anger returning to it. "I was *defending* you, should I have let him assume you fuck me and leave me unsatisfied?"

"Yes," Hannibal replied crisply. "Better an implication of indifference than impotence. What did you think your words would achieve?"

"I thought he would leave me *alone* ." He hadn't thought, not really. Will had been angry and scared and just a tiny bit drunk. He'd wanted to feel safe.

"And he would have, if you'd come and found me." Hannibal sighed, shaking his head. "You are impulsive and aggressive. This will only happen again, and again, until you learn to control your temper or leave a situation."

Will flinched. It wasn't anything he hadn't heard before, but it hurt more from Hannibal, the only person who'd treated him halfway decently since he'd been picked up off the streets.

Hannibal eyed him. "I'll offer you a choice, Will. I can take you back-"

Will's legs stopped supporting him. He collapsed to the floor, wide, terrified eyes locked on Hannibal's carefully shined shoes. They approached, the steps loud and echoing in Will's head, and then two hands cupped his face and lifted it up.

"I can take you back," Hannibal said firmly, "And pay a second price for you to make sure this purchase stays off your record. No one ever need know you had a failed placement."

The sound Will made was helpless, entirely weak; a soft keening little whine that went straight to the core of Hannibal's desire to protect and nurture. He forced himself to remain impassive, waiting for the Omega at his feet to decide his own fate. He was a beautiful thing, would bear beautiful pups, to whoever would tame him.

But tamed, he would not be half as vibrant, half as extraordinary as he was. He would be an ornament for the rest of his life and nothing more.

And Will knew the same. He knew the same and it terrified him that Hannibal could send him away and wash his hands of him. He should have allowed himself to be mated, bitten his damn tongue and earned his independence without the attitude. He should have -

“Please don’t send me back,” he whispered, eyes up, at this point uncaring that he was begging, that he was literally on his knees where he had never wanted to be. “I’ll do better, I’ll try harder, I won’t say another word, please.”

Hannibal sighed, a low sound humming alongside, and drew a hand through Will’s hair, letting the curls slip through his fingers like silken things. It occurred to Will, somewhere far, far at the back of his mind, that this was the first time Hannibal had ever touched him, it occurred even farther back, that it felt wonderful.

“There will still be consequences, Will.”

“I’ll suffer them, please,” Will swallowed, turning his face against the hand still cupping his cheek, submissive, little, helpless. But beneath that trembling, fighting, frightened. The Alpha sighed and stepped back, letting Will go.

“Get up, please,” he told him, not unkindly, turning on his heel to walk to the low couch against one of the walls. “Come here to me.”

Will followed, hesitating only slightly when Hannibal sat. He knew, before he stepped closer, before Hannibal wrapped a hand around his wrist, where this was going. His chest ached, his heart racing.

“I don’t wish you silent, Will,” Hannibal said, pulling Will to stand between his knees, “Nor broken. I enjoy you vibrant and distinct. But I cannot change the legal and social expectations of your dynamic. All I can do is correct your behavior when you risk yourself.”

“It’s going to hurt,” Will said, his voice more childish and anxious than he’d meant it to be. Hannibal smiled wryly.

“It’s going to cause you discomfort,” He said, reaching for Will’s belt, “But then it will be over, and the two of us will move on together. And you can change your mind at any time, Will. That’s not a threat. It’s an offer of a clean slate, should you so choose.”

“No,” Will said, fumbling to shove his own pants down, “No, don’t send me back, I can take it.”

“Brave boy,” Hannibal praised. From him, it didn’t sound condescending, or perhaps that was the alcohol talking. He kept Will’s gaze as he helped him shuck his underwear as well, never once attempting to sneak a peek at things Will had not offered to show him. “Over my lap, Will. Hands against the floor.”

Will swallowed but moved to obey. It was only when he settled his stomach to Hannibal’s thighs that he realized how close he was to presenting in this position. The thought ran shivers up and down his spine but he remained where he was. If that was what it took to stay then he’d suffer it.

But the Alpha didn't move to spread his legs, or debase him more than Will was already. He drew his palms warm and almost gentle over Will's skin, from his tailbone down to where his ass curved and met his thighs. Back and forth, again and again, almost soothing. Will ducked his head between his arms and fisted his hands against the floor.

The first spank didn't hurt, not immediately. Will felt the heat of it, heard the sound skin made upon contacting skin, and released a soft little sigh of surprise. The next, however, he felt much more keenly. If the Alpha took pleasure in punishing Will this way, it wasn't physically evident. Will pursed his lips and tried to hide his sounds behind gritted teeth as Hannibal continued to spank him, painting his ass and the tops of his thighs pink, then darker, some parts bruising quickly, others just hot to the touch. Will didn't beg for it to stop, he didn't squirm - at least, he hoped he didn't. He just took it.

When Hannibal stopped, hands touching Will gently once more, knuckles cool over his fevered skin, Will whimpered. In pain, truly, but also, horrifyingly, with arousal. His little cock stood hard and aching between his legs, thankfully just out of reach of where Hannibal would feel it were Will to shift. Maybe it was the position, maybe it was the fact that Hannibal was finally touching him, maybe it was the alcohol, the muddying of Will's usually clear mind, but he was so turned on he could barely breathe for it.

Hannibal hummed softly. Given his lack of a struggle, he didn't think Will realized how thickly his arousal had scented the air. The beginning scent of slick between his thighs. It would have been a strong temptation for any Alpha, but Hannibal prided himself on his self control. He helped Will to his feet, pulling his slacks and underwear back up around his hips.

Will shifted uncomfortably, no doubt finally noticing the more physical signs of his arousal. He avoided Hannibal's gaze, face pink. One day, Hannibal was going to spread him wide and bury his face between Will's sweet thighs, and see just how pink he could go. But for now…

"I think it would be best if you returned to your room for the night," he said gently. Perhaps Will would take it as a punishment, but truly, it was a mercy. An unmated Omega reeking of need would only attract more trouble, and he would not blame Will if his control slipped again.

Will nodded mutely. His eyes had gone slightly vacant, perhaps from alcohol, perhaps the instinctive need of an Omega to be touched and gentled. Hannibal stood and allowed himself one last temptation, brushing his lips lightly against Will's forehead. "Call me if you get hungry. I'll save a plate for you."

Will made a soft sound, a warbled little thing in his throat and blinked languidly up at Hannibal. The blue Hannibal had so coveted was ringed with gold when Will looked between Hannibal's eyes, just enough, and it stole his breath. Will licked his lips apart, voice just a crack of sound when he tried to use it before choosing to just nod instead.

He wasn't hungry, not with a hunger that food could satiate. And he knew that should he wake at night and find himself in need of a meal, he wasn't barred from the kitchen.

Hannibal wanted nothing more than to touch Will again, to keep him here in this room and draw his nose through those silken curls, his tongue over the dusting of sweat at his jaw, to

draw a purr, warm and deep from within him. Instead, he guided Will to the door with a directing hand and watched him climb the stairs, knuckles white where they clung to the bannister.

Will didn't think about anything, couldn't think about anything but the growing need in his belly, between his legs, as he took the stairs and threw himself into his room, locking the door behind him. A hand immediately shoved between his thighs, his other between his teeth to muffle, even a little, the whimpering need that sounded far too loud in his ears.

God, he hadn't felt this disoriented since his last heat, since the last time he'd been entirely out of control of his body while hormones raged wars within him. Now, he was in control enough to understand what he was responding to and why, he rubbed his little cock against his hand with wanton abandon.

Hannibal filled his nostrils still, that cool, pleasant, soothing scent that made Will weak at the knees, so he gave up standing, he slid down the door to the floor, wincing when his bruises touched the ground. He spread his thighs wide to fumble with his pants and underwear again until he was bare, head knocking softly back against the door as he stroked himself and bit hard against his fist.

He could feel how slick he was, uncomfortably, embarrassingly so, and caught some against his fingertips as he squeezed his balls and moved to stroke his cock again, easing the way with the lubrication and pulling his keens high and desperate against the hand in his mouth.

Hannibal's scent against his palate, his hands against Will's skin. Warmth and heat and pain. Hannibal had touched and rubbed over the curve of Will's ass and all Will had wanted was for his hands to slip just a little bit and pierce him, fill him. He'd never wanted so badly to be penetrated, not outside of a heat.

Hannibal would be big. Big and thick and- Will's hand tightened around his cock and he came hard, head thrown back against the wood as he pulled pulse after pulse of come from his body.

There were imprints of his teeth on his hand, and Will's throat ached from the keening cry that had slipped unbidden from him. He felt none of the guilt or embarrassment that usually came after the high of an orgasm. If anything, his need had only grown.

The shower. He'd take care of it in the shower, and if he was lucky, he'd be able to sleep without Hannibal in his head.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

> *Beyond the door, Hannibal held himself stone still against the opposite wall and forced himself not to breathe. If he breathed in, right then, if he scented the smell of his boy in heat, aching, desperate for him, he would claw down the door.*
>
> The heat begins...

Will hadn't even noticed that two months had passed in Hannibal's home until a course he had signed up for, with the Alpha's permission, emailed him to remind him to register for video lectures. The news was as surprising as it was unsurprising; after the dinner party that Will had forced himself to push from his mind, both of them had circled each other a little warily.

Hannibal, having finally touched his Omega, smelled his arousal, felt his warmth against him, had to push himself not to do so again. He directed his anger towards the things he made in the kitchen, not at the young man who refused him the thing that was Hannibal's by right to take. Because he had promised, and Hannibal would never break the integrity of a promise.

For one more month, Will could try to resist him, and Hannibal would not jeopardise his chances. If Will could prove himself, through a heat, through his instincts screaming, howling, shrieking at him, then Hannibal would keep his word. He would find another to bond with, to mate, and give Will the independence he'd have earned.

But if he didn't… oh, if he didn't… those thoughts came deep in slumber, when Hannibal knew he would not act upon them. In secluded, decadent rooms of his mind palace, Hannibal took his boy apart nightly; he replayed in his mind every whine and whimper Will had gifted him, brought forth the scent of him, heady like wildflowers in summer, imagined the taste of his slick against his tongue.

He ruined that boy, devoured him. Night after night, he had Will on his knees, presenting, begging, weeping for him, sobbing for Hannibal's knot, coming and coming and coming…

Hannibal would make a mess of him. Hannibal would make him needy and desperate, would teach him to beg and bend and submit to everything Hannibal could put him through, until they were both sated and exhausted.

If Will resisted him, Hannibal would never be properly sated. Clever, beautiful, wild little thing, there would never be another like him.

As Will's heat crept closer and time ran short, Hannibal grew wary. There was a chance that Will would have no interest in him, and he was not entirely sure he could bear it.

"Would you go to dinner with me?"

Will looked up from his studies, glasses sliding down his nose. He was endearingly adorable as he shoved them back up. "What?"

He echoed Hannibal's sentiments. Hannibal hadn't entirely planned on asking. The thought had occurred to him, of course, but when he'd stopped in the doorway to the study, he'd planned only on lingering a moment. Enjoying the light in Will's hair, the look of concentration on his face.

"Dinner," Hannibal repeated after a moment. "I thought you might enjoy leaving the house for a while. You've been studying hard."

Will's smile brought warmth beneath his eyes, not quite a flush but close, and Hannibal was glad he'd kept his hands behind his back, poise drilled into him from youth, so that Will couldn't see how hard he was squeezing them into fists.

The truth was that Will *had* been studying hard. As soon as he'd enrolled in his classes, he had tentatively reminded Hannibal, and the man had offered him the study as his own should he need it. And Will had diligently worked there since. He hadn't had such a structured schedule since he was very young, and it was novel and thrilling to be able to use his mind again for more than overthinking.

He glanced to the page he'd been working on, an essay, and turned to look at the Alpha again.

"I'd like that," he admitted, biting the inside of his lip and looking to his computer again. He was ahead in his homework, ahead in his reading. He was devouring information like a man starved and it was growing to the point of obsession. Will knew he needed the time away, and the fact that Hannibal had asked him, asked, not told…

"Do I have time to clean up before we go?" he didn't even know what time it was, he'd had his nose buried in his work since breakfast.

"A bit," Hannibal said, a fond smile sliding over his features. Will saved his work again and gave a slow stretch, wincing when his back cracked.

"Okay. I'll hurry."

The restaurant was too nice, even though Will had worn a tie. He felt slightly out of place, moreso when the *waiter* pulled his chair out instead of Hannibal.

Hannibal, on the other hand, seemed entirely comfortable, ordering wine in fluent Italian. Will was struck with the absurd thought that he was *showing off* , demonstrating his ability to provide in an appeal to Will's Omegan instincts.

Provide. Protect. Pleasure. Three things Omegas sought in a mate, three things Will had never put much stock in. They were constantly in his head now, when his dreams were filled with Hannibal, he woke up with slick between his thighs and an ache in his groin.

Hannibal could provide, certainly. He had the money. He had the skill in the kitchen. If Will bore pups, they would never go hungry. They would never struggle on the streets like Will had.

Will ducked his head into his menu. He was being ridiculous.

He didn't even want pups.

The lie was easy enough to bury beneath the myriad of dish names he couldn't pronounce, and Will gave Hannibal a somewhat helpless look over the top of the menu before admitting defeat.

"I'm worried I'll order something offensive by accident," he said, and Hannibal's amused hum warmed Will to the bones.

"Doubtful, but now I'm certainly curious to see you try."

Will drew a hand through his hair and tugged it, wondering why he couldn't keep the stupid smile off his face. Hannibal had not been cruel to him, not even the night Will had very obviously screwed up. Even his punishment had been merciful, not public, not loud, not undeserved. And since, Hannibal had not stopped offering Will everything he needed for study, for a varied diet, for sartorial choices.

He was truly, shamelessly spoiling him, and Will had to admit, in the dead of night, alone in his bed, that he liked it. He liked feeling special enough, worthy enough of such attention. Surely a man who only wanted him to breed would have long ago given up and just taken what he wanted.

Will pointed at two things that sounded the least frightening and Hannibal leaned nearer to consider his choices. When he looked up at Will his eyes were narrowed in amusement.

"Beef cheek and salted caviar," he commented. "Not unheard of as a combination but surprising."

Will laughed despite himself, a quiet, self-deprecating thing. "I told you it was hopeless."

"You read through half my library collection in the first two weeks you were with me," Hannibal chided gently. "With practice, this too will be easy."

Will licked his lips, tilting his head thoughtfully. He didn't miss the quick dart of Hannibal's eyes to his exposed neck. Good to know he wasn't the only one so easily affected. "Choose for me?" He asked. "Just this once, and you can teach me some things while we wait."

He played demure quite well. Innocence was lovely on him. Hannibal took the menu from his hands, folding it beneath his own. "Very well, then."

He ordered for them both, as requested, but the expected lesson never came. Will mentioned something in passing about one of his classes, and they were both lost in conversation immediately.

This was what always happened when they sat down for a meal. They shared too many interests to properly linger on a topic. One would start a book the other had finished, Hannibal would make a remark about his patients, or Will would have an assignment to rant about. Their dinners had begun to stretch later and later, and it seemed destined to happen here as well. They were both surprised when their food arrived.

Will had grown used to decadent meals since living with Hannibal, but he was still nervous every time something was set before him that he had never tried before. What if he didn't know how to eat it? What if he didn't like it? He couldn't just refuse to eat and leave it on his plate, that would be rude.

Hannibal did not abide rudeness.

He knew what oysters were, but he'd never tried them, and he looked at the plate with mingled curiosity and panic; this was absolutely something he could mess up and make a mess of. When he glanced up at Hannibal, the other was taking a slow sip of his wine, amusement darkening his eyes.

"I know you don't eat the shell," Will offered blandly, to Hannibal's delight.

"You know more than most, then," he replied, sitting nearer and reaching for an oyster to demonstrate. He worked it free carefully, cutting away the foot attached to the iridescent shell, and squeezed a piece of lemon over it for flavor. Eyes on Will, he deliberately set it between his lips and tilted back his head, as though drinking the thing rather than eating it.

"Swallow," he remarked after, putting the empty shell down against the side of his own plate. "Don't over work it with your teeth."

Nervously, Will copied Hannibal's motions. The texture startled him at first, but he swallowed like Hannibal had told him.

It was good. A lot better than he'd been expecting. It was hard to get past the instinct to chew, but Will had another, and another, and between the two of them they polished off the entire plate and a full bottle of wine.

Will felt warm, inside and out. Hannibal's hand rested on the table, and Will wanted to reach out and take it. He wanted to hold it, running his thumb over the ridges of Hannibal's knuckles, but he also wanted to take two fingers between his lips and see if he could make Hannibal as crazy as Hannibal made him.

Will's heat was on the horizon. He was less than two weeks away from winning his independence, and he felt the pull grow stronger every day.

He wondered if Hannibal would visit him, after he'd mated. The thought sent a sudden stabbing ache through Will, a jealousy that burned bright and loud: *my* Alpha.

It was proximity. That was all it was. They'd synced up with one another, sharing pheromones and enclosed spaces for so long that their scents were beginning to overlap. Once there was some distance, Will would realize that it was all just biology. It had nothing to do with long conversations, with hands on his skin and dreams of pleasure.

Dessert was a thing so intricate Will was almost scared to eat it; it looked like a work of art. Hannibal watched the way Will's eyes widened in awe, let him take his time to deconstruct the piece on his own, smiling when Will laughed or cringed at breaking or cutting into something so perfect.

Will was perfect.

In his imperfections, he was divine.

Hannibal wanted to promise him everything, the chance to study, the chance to work if he wanted, independence, his own home, should he wish, if only, *if only* he would be Hannibal's own. His desire had grown from the day he'd met the petulant thing, from something so base as the need for beautiful and healthy young to wanting to know every part of who Will was.

As Will sucked chocolate ganache from his spoon and left a smear of it against the corner of his mouth, Hannibal had to fight everything in him not to reach out, turn Will's head, and lick him clean. He knew Will was due to go into heat soon, he could already smell the beginnings of it, cloying and addictive like a drug.

He blinked as Will brought up a napkin to wipe his mouth, and sat back to admire him instead, one hand grasping against his thigh under the table to keep himself grounded.

"Shall we have a nightcap here?" Hannibal asked him when Will had polished off dessert. "Or at home."

"Do we still have the whiskey you served me last week?"

"We do." And if they didn't Hannibal would have gone out and bought six more bottles.

"Let's have it at home."

Will's heat built steadily over the next week.

He was ravenous, asking for seconds and sometimes thirds of meals. He'd added granola bars and water bottles to the grocery list and stashed them all over his room.

The bed, carefully placed in the middle of the room, became impossible to sleep in. Will dragged the mattress off and against the wall, building up a pile of blankets and pillows to nest in. One day while Hannibal was at work, he stole the sheets from his bed, filling his nest with the soothing smell of Alpha.

He had toys ready. He had a lock. He had rations. This was the last step between Will and freedom.

Why didn't it feel good?

The ache in his belly was always what startled him awake. That ache that tore at him like claws and talons, making him feel more and more and more hollow the longer he let them dig into him.

He knew what would make it go away, he knew because he'd done it before, and he'd suffered through heats alone all his life. But buried so deep in the smell of Hannibal, knowing he was just beyond the door, just down the hall, made reaching for a toy almost impossible. He needed more than a toy, he needed the heat of his Alpha pressing up against his back, he needed teeth and nails sharp against his skin, he needed Hannibal's voice, warm and smooth like honey to soothe him.

Will didn't realize he was whining until there was a gentle knock on the door, and even then the sound grew louder before he stifled it to silence.

"Will."

God, *God* he wanted to let him in, he wanted nothing more than to let Hannibal in. he forced himself to bury himself deeper into his nest, desperately seeking the smell of him so he wasn't tempted to open the door to the rest of him.

"Will," he said again, voice rougher than Will had ever heard it, but still steady, still warm. "I've left sheets for you, and food, just by the door. Please take care of yourself."

Don't go. It caught in Will's throat and came out as another sorrowful, wordless whine. He shoved a fistful of the sheets against his face, his mouth, trying to deceive himself into believing his Alpha was right there with him.

In the hall, Hannibal leaned heavily against the door. He knew better than to try it, but his fist clenched white just above the doorknob. The sound of his Omega, *his* , suffering, was too much. It threatened to tip him over into his own suffering. He was holding on to himself by a thread, kept together by the knowledge that Will needed him to be stable.

"They're my sheets," he tried. "I slept in them last night. I can back away so you can take them."

A sound, the quiet rustle of fabric. A hesitant little whimper.

Hannibal took a few steps back.

The door cracked open, barely enough for a hand to dart out and grab the sheets. The smell was already unbearable, and Hannibal knew from listening that Will had not even tried to sate himself yet. It would fill the whole house when Will finally picked up a toy.

The door slammed shut again. Will had not bothered with the tray of food, too focused on the sheets and a hasty retreat. He backed himself into his nest, Hannibal's blankets over his head, trapping him in Alpha scent, like being pinned underneath Hannibal's body, but without the pleasant weight.

Slick and aching, Will wriggled out of his pajamas. They were too much, too restricting for his suddenly sensitive skin. He couldn't wait anymore. He squirmed around to settle to his knees, back arched, chest to the soaked sheets beneath as he sought back with his hand to press against his hole. He was dripping with slick, with sweat, his breath too hot for the cocoon of the blankets and he didn't care, he didn't *care* .

He bit down against the sheet, breathed deep, through his nose, through his mouth, filling himself with the smell of Hannibal, the smell of *his* Alpha, and slipped two fingers easily into himself.

Beyond the door, Hannibal held himself stone still against the opposite wall and forced himself not to breathe. If he breathed in, right then, if he scented the smell of his boy in heat, aching, desperate for him, he would claw down the door.

And he owed it to Will not to, he owed it to him to keep a promise, if only the one.

At the first sound Will made, Hannibal turned on his heel and took the stairs two at a time on silent socked feet. He moved, faster than he should have been able, faster than he needed to in the *opposite direction* from where he needed to be. Hannibal made his way downstairs and then further still, into the wine cellar, towards the very back of it where the air was stale with stone and water.

Here, he pressed himself to the cool wall and panted, catching his breath.

His entire body screamed to be upstairs, screamed to break through the barrier Will had made between them. He needed to take care of him, hold him, soothe him, *claim him* . The idea that Will was up there, alone, whining for Hannibal, and Hannibal was *here* …

He felt sick. For the first time in his entire life, Hannibal felt ill with arousal.

Two fingers wasn't enough. Will slid in a third and whined unhappily when they were too small, too short. Wrong angle, wrong shape. He needed to be *fucked,* held down and knotted until he screamed. Fucked until he was dry, until he was begging for it to stop and then fucked again anyway.

Every thought pitched him higher and higher. Will reached for one of his toys, working the thick dildo into his body in desperate thrusts, body aching for the knot at the base.

Fuck and come and fuck and come and none of it brought Will any release. He kept losing himself to fantasies, a dozen scenes with Hannibal. Loving and slow, fast and brutal. He imagined himself laughing and screaming and found them both equally intoxicating.

He wanted to beg. Hannibal left him dinner with barely a word, and Will wanted to *scream* after him, to throw himself at Hannibal's feet and his mercy.

His little cock was sore already from how much Will had touched it, seeking a relief that wouldn't come. Will drifted in a haze of fantasy and exhaustion. He would fall asleep with his toy buried deep inside him and wake up rocking back on it, unable to find any restfulness.

His whines carried down the hall, carried far throughout the house. It seemed that anywhere Hannibal was, he could hear them, yet nothing could make him leave the house. He couldn't leave his Omega - and he was *his* , Hannibal was certain, one way or another he was going to make Will *his* - to such suffering alone, he couldn't leave the house unguarded, unsafe, when something so vulnerable was crying out for him.

It had been a day. A single horrid goddamn day, and Hannibal hadn't slept a minute of it.

Will's file had suggested his previous heats had lasted no more than three days, so they were through at least some of it. Just two more, twice as long, and it would be over, it would be done. And Hannibal would find a way, any way, to have Will stay, after.

For the moment, though, he undressed, uncaring for the state of his clothes - rumpled, worn, sweaty - and left his clothes by the door for Will instead of sheets. He forced himself to take a shower. When he came out again, the hallway hummed with a smell so sweet Hannibal almost made a sound of pain breathing it in. And his clothes were no longer by the door, replaced, instead, with one of Will's sweaters.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

> *“You didn’t break the door,” he said, licking his lips, eyes wide, bright, gold gleaming through the blue. “You didn’t break the door, you could have, why didn’t you break the door?”*
>
> *“Will, do not be cruel.”*
>
> *“Answer me!”*
>
> Heat heating up!

The toys didn’t help. Nothing helped, though Hannibal’s clothes came the closest. Will ended up half wearing them, pants around his knees as he fucked himself desperately.

He couldn’t even make himself come anymore. Not from sensitivity, but because the heat had built up so much that he could no longer satisfy himself. Every heat had been worse than the last, and this one was moving Will to tears.

“Will.”

Alpha. *Hannibal* . Knocking on the door to bring Will a meal and some more fabric for his nest. He was such a *good* Alpha, providing like this.

“I’m stepping away now-“

“Don’t!” Will yelped, his plea high and desperate. “God, please, talk to me, talk to me I can’t do it anymore.” he tried asking again but his voice broke into sobs, uncontrollable and childish. He couldn’t, he just *couldn’t* do this alone, not again, not ever again. He couldn’t remember why he was being stubborn anymore, he couldn’t remember anything but the fact that he had to, for some reason, he *had* to make it through this alone, just once more.

“Hannibal, please,” he cried, clawing at his nest. “Talk to me, say anything -”

“I’m here,” Hannibal’s voice was warm, rough, low. There was a growl beneath that shivered Will’s bones and he moaned at the feeling, knees slipping wider in the hollow of his nest, chest pressing as flat to the floor as he could get it, ass up and thighs trembling. Will closed his eyes, imagined those words being poured over his skin.

At the door, Hannibal was trying to catch his breath, his entire body pressed to the wood and nails leaving visible gauges in it as he forced himself still. He licked his lips, tasting Will against them. He was so close, there was nothing between them but a two inch barrier.

“I’m here, Will,” he repeated. “You’re doing so well, beautiful boy,” Will’s answering whine drew another growl from Hannibal, his own cock hard between his legs, pressed painfully against the door. “I want to stroke the hair from your face,” he murmured, teeth gritted, nails drawing deeper into the wood as he moved them over and over the same trenches he’d dug. “To see your eyes turn golden for me, your mouth, Will, *God* your mouth…”

Hannibal ducked his head, forehead turning over and over on the wood to simulate the closest thing to a nuzzle he could. “You’re bent over so deep, I know you are,” he groaned. “Presenting so beautifully for me, spread wide and aching for my knot.” Will’s cry was pitched, breathless, and Hannibal’s answering sound was damn near feral. He stepped away from the door and pressed a hand to his eyes, digging his nails into the palm of his other hand to ground himself with pain. “I’d give it to you, sweet thing, fuck into you hard and split you open, until you begged, and wept, and sobbed for me to stop.”

Will rocked in his nest again, caught between the toy inside him and the hand pulling desperately at his cock. Hannibal’s words painted a picture he could see so clearly, one that he wanted to sink into. “Alpha, please, I’d be so *good.”*

“ I know you would,” Hannibal growled, trying so hard not to step towards the door again. “You’re such a good boy for me, such a pretty, perfect Omega. Come for me, Will, show me you can be good.”

Will’s cry was piercing, not in sound but in emotion. He sobbed through his orgasm, his voice devolving into gasps for breath. Hannibal wrenched himself backwards, turning on his heel and heading for the stairs.

In his nest, Will threw the toy aside, as hard as he could. It was the closest he’d come to satisfaction since his torment began, and even now, all he wanted was to do it again.

Hannibal had done that. Hannibal had given him an orgasm without touching him, without even *trying.* He’d kept his word.

Provide. Protect. Pleasure.

“Alpha,” Will whispered, and then louder, scrambling for the door, stumbling over blankets, dressed in Hannibal’s undershirt and nothing else. “Alpha!”

Hannibal wasn’t at the door, he wasn’t in the corridor and Will’s mind was so rattled, so entirely addled, that he could only think that Hannibal had left. The sound he made was inhuman, it was entirely instinctual, a keening, aching wail that brought Hannibal’s footsteps on the stairs within moments, staring wide-eyed at the little thing crying for him.

He swallowed. There was only so much patience a man had, and he had kept his word, he had done his best but *this* …

“Will,” his voice was a warning growl, so low Will felt it, rather than heard it. He trembled, clinging to the doorframe, staring at the man who looked like he was going to eat him alive.

“You didn’t break the door,” he said, licking his lips, eyes wide, bright, gold gleaming through the blue. “You didn’t break the door, you could have, why didn’t you break the door?”

“Will, do not be cruel.”

“Answer me!”

Hannibal showed his teeth and Will shrank against the wall, slipping free of the safety of his room and into the open hallway. He swallowed down his panic, swallowed down everything and used the last remaining senses he had control of before his heat took him again.

“Answer me, why.”

“Because I promised,” Hannibal grit out. “But I can’t, Will, I *cannot* if you -”

“Take me,” Will said, words clear as anything. “Have me, Hannibal, please, right now before I lose my mind.”

There was no pause, no breath of space. One minute Will was pressed against the wall, the next a body had barrelled into him, shoving him back towards the room, back towards his nest. A strong hand gripped the back of his neck, fingers digging into pressure points. Will folded obediently, going to his knees and then to his chest in the blankets. Hannibal blanketed him, pinning him in place. A high, keening cry left Will, as Hannibal shoved out of the clothes he’d been wearing.

Will reached back to help guide him, and found his hands caught and slammed back against the mattress.

“ *Present* ,” Hannibal growled. Will knew if he turned his eyes would be nearly entirely red. He could smell him, taste him. He arched his back, trembling with impatience and need.

Hannibal rubbed up against Will’s ass once, twice, three times before his cock caught on Will’s stretched hole, pushing forward in a steady grind that made Will want to scream.

He was used to the pressure, the fullness, but a stiff, still toy couldn’t compare. Hannibal was living, warm, splitting Will open around him. Will had no control over the speed or the depth, no control even over his own body, not when he finally, *finally* felt what he’d been craving.

“Alpha, Hannibal, *please* .”

Hannibal set his teeth to Will’s throat, high up, higher than was traditional, and Will couldn’t make himself care.

“Yes, yes, bite, *please* .”

Will could swear he heard the snap of skin when Hannibal’s teeth dug into him, drew blood, pressed even harder after. He moaned, arching his back higher, knees slipping over the mess of sheets beneath them as he tried to widen his stance, to present *better* to give Hannibal *more* …

His Alpha pounded into him, finally claiming, finally taking and Will was *euphoric* , he could barely breathe. Blood slipped down his jaw to his chin, smeared over his lips when Hannibal dug his hand into the back of his neck to hold Will down and unfurled up from him again. Will made sounds he had sworn to himself he would never make. He keened and whimpered, begged blindly and endlessly for *more* and *harder, please, please, please* -

Hannibal felt feral. Usually so in control of his emotions, he couldn't find it in himself to hold back, and why should he? Why should he be gentle in claiming what was rightfully his? Breeding *his* Omega, satisfying *his* urges? Beneath him, his beautiful boy trembled, shoved the heels of his hands into his nest, relished in the blood that slicked thick down from his bonding mark and reddened his lips further. He was *radiant* .

Hannibal leaned nearer to bite again, over Will's shoulder, again, just beneath. With every little keen Hannibal was determined to drive Will to voicelessness, to bring him to sounds only instinct controlled, sounds that belonged to Hannibal and no one else.

" *Alpha* ," Will whimpered, "Alpha, knot, please, *please* -"

He'd been so empty for so long, so desperate and needy. Will slid his hands forward on the bed, up and out of the way, so there could be no mistaking his obedience, his complete submission. Hannibal filled him over and over again, but it wasn't enough, he was still so *empty* …

Hannibal's free hand caught Will's hip, and his teeth caught his neck again, and he pushed in and in and *in* until Will felt the swelling of his knot catch against his rim. Hannibal growled, a sound that vibrated all the way through Will's skull, and slammed his hips forward one more time. Will choked on air, his body giving way for the knot, for fullness, locking them together as Hannibal came, as he filled Will with wave after wave of seed, flooding him, *breeding* him.

Will spasmed and clenched around him, his desperate little cock twitching as it dribbled come down his thighs, aftershocks of pleasure that didn't seem to end. Hannibal cupped him there, his big hand covering Will entirely, and he coaxed Will to grind against it as he ground into Will, until Will was sobbing and shaking through a second orgasm, body squeezing tight to coax more seed from Hannibal.

His body wanted Hannibal to breed him, wanted to bear Hannibal tiny golden-eyed pups, and in this moment, Will wanted nothing more. He wanted Hannibal to fill him until he was swollen and weighted down with it, wanted Hannibal to grind into him until his knot went down and then fuck him again, wanted to be so wrung out that his voice was a raspy whimper and Hannibal had to hold him down to properly fuck him.

Hannibal pressed soft kisses over the bites he'd left, his cock twitching gently inside Will. "Beautiful Will," he praised, "My sweet Omega."

Will whimpered, softly, and turned his face against the sheets so Hannibal could kiss his cheek next, draw fingers through his hair to get it off his face, as he's promised he would. With a deep sigh, Will let his eyes close and slipped a hand down against his belly, rubbing softly there where it felt plumper than usual, where he was *filled* .

Hannibal continued to kiss over Will's skin, nuzzling against him, breathing him in. It took a moment for him to realize that Will was purring beneath him, a warm, rumbly sound of blissful pleasure. Hannibal rocked into him gently, enough to shift the knot against Will's body where it clung tight to him, and Will squeezed him in answer.

"Wild thing," Hannibal whispered. "You drove me to madness."

"You didn't break your word."

"No."

Will's purr vibrated deeper between them and he stretched, languid and lazy, under his Alpha. "My Alpha," he murmured, trying the words on for size, saying them aloud when he'd been only dreaming about them for months. They felt right. They tasted like home. "That's why you're mine."

They rested for a while, long enough for Hannibal's knot to go down and his cock to slip free. He made a displeased noise at the wasteful trail of seed that slipped down Will's thighs, swiping it up on his fingertips and shoving them back into Will. Flat on his stomach, Will whined and spread his legs further, trembling. What would have been a harsh, thorough finger-fucking any other day was just a tease when heat was burning through him, and after only a few moments he was rocking back onto Hannibal's fingers and begging.

Little changed over the remainder of that day and the next. They slept, Hannibal fucked another burst of seed into Will's body, a hand curved possessively over the slight rounding of his stomach. Occasionally, he was able to coax a bite or two of food into Will before need overtook him again, and the cycle began anew.

Will was sore and aching by the time he felt relief begin to seep into him. He was in the home stretch now. Maybe another round or two, and he'd be able to stop crying every time Hannibal pulled out of him. The sheets were filthy, covered in sweat and their mingled essences. The whole room reeked of them; Will would have to sleep in Hannibal's bed from now on if he wanted to be able to breathe. The smell of sex would be far less appealing once the last of the heat had left him.

"Again, sweet boy?" Hannibal whispered in his ear, one hand rubbing over his distended stomach.

"Mmm, I don't know yet." Will rolled onto his back, smiling up at him. "It might be slowing."

Hannibal did not answer. His eyes had traveled downward, to the slight swelling of Will's stomach, coated in his own fluids, his cock soft against his thigh, finally.

Hannibal had felt it, of course, but looking at it, Will could have passed for the very early stages of pregnancy. The way he would look in just a few months, if this heat took. The way he would look glowing and filled with *Hannibal's* pups. Hannibal felt a surge of possessiveness, as bright and strong as it had been in the very first moment they'd come together. Possessiveness, protectiveness. Will rolled over to reach for a granola bar and

Hannibal hauled him back with a furious growl. *His* Omega would not be leaving the nest until Hannibal deemed it safe.

Will's eyes widened, a gold shimmer just beneath the blue, a flicker of the tapetum lucidum usually hidden so well outside of a heat. He could feel the vibrations of Hannibal's growl, not directed at him but *around* him, and didn't feel the need to cower, but comfort.

"Hannibal," he murmured, spreading a hand through the warm hair on Hannibal's chest, feeling the hammering of his heart, the rumble of what had been, for the last few days, a purr, and was now something far more feral instead.

Rut , Will thought absently, still trying to soothe his Alpha with gentle touches, *I've made him go into rut…*

He'd only ever read about ruts, he'd never even considered that he would be able to bring one out in someone. He whined, a soft little thing, and Hannibal pressed closer, heavy over Will, possessive, demanding as he roughly nuzzled against him, drawing their cheeks, their temples, their noses together.

"Alpha," he tried, knowing there was probably nothing, now, that would get through to the man until his desperate need was sated. Curious that it had come *after* Will's heat rather than during, curious that it had come at all. There was a strange power in it, if Will gave himself a moment to think about it, to drive someone so in control entirely out of it. Will licked his lips and Hannibal pressed harder against him, his cock swelling where it rubbed at Will's thigh.

With a swallow he spread his legs to accommodate, drawing his knees up, slick and semen slipping thick from his hole. Will raised his chin, curled his nails over Hannibal's strong arms.

" *Alpha* ," he purred.

Hannibal surged over him, for a moment rutting blindly at Will's thighs. Will reached for his cock, guiding it to his raw entrance and gasping when Hannibal fucked sharply into him.

It had not yet hurt, and it didn't entirely now. There were enough hormones still thrumming through Will's body to make him crave more, but the worst of the heat was over and sensitivity was beginning to set in. Will dug his nails into Hannibal's skin, whining when his hips moved harder, forcing Will's body to shift across the filthy bedding.

"Nnng… Hannibal, Alpha!" Will shook his head, legs wrapping around Hannibal's hips as he struggled to keep up with the punishing pace battering his swollen prostate. His cock twitched between his thighs, red and oversensitive, and he wasn't sure he could come again.

"Be good." The words rumbled through Will, hooking low in his belly as Hannibal nuzzled up under his jaw. "Be good, Omega. Take."

"C-can't-" Will gasped, head thrown back, "Oh god, it's so much. So full…"

" *Yes* ,"

Will moaned, riding out the pleasure-pain as Hannibal took him again, knotted him, sunk his teeth into Will's skin as though holding onto him. Will's body was exhausted. He wanted to bathe, he wanted to sleep in a clean bed with the windows open to air the room, he wanted to eat properly for the first time in *days* .

He wanted Hannibal, but he wanted to *rest* .

He petted gently over Hannibal's sweat-tangled hair, trying to catch his breath, trying to doze before Hannibal's instincts drove him into Will again. He squeezed around the knot, smiling wide when Hannibal growled in response, not even raising his head, and hummed, dropping his head back.

His mind was clearer, now, with the sea of raging hormones having finally ebbed, and Will brought a hand to his throat to touch gingerly over the claim Hannibal had bitten into him. It was raw, he could feel the outline of crooked teeth, and no regrets, which was strange. He'd known what he'd offered, when he'd called Hannibal to him, he had his wits about him then, but now, clear and more grounded in reality, Will didn't feel a pang of panic that he had expected.

Bonded.

Claimed.

Bred.

He swallowed, turning his cheek against Hannibal's head with a sigh and breathing him in.

Hannibal gave Will everything he had promised. He pet and nuzzled and bit. He filled Will so much that he was heavy with it, that Will's own body could no longer keep up with the demand after three days of heat.

Eventually, he had Will screaming, just as both of them had wanted. Between rounds, Will was sore and barely able to move, but he knew there was still a bit more time before Hannibal was fully cognizant again. His body ached, his last orgasm had been dry and painful. When Hannibal nodded off for a moment, Will had made his move, slipping quietly from the bed and creeping for the door.

The loss of warmth had woken Hannibal immediately, and this time, his growl had been aimed *entirely* at Will, at a disobedient Omega who'd left the safety of the nest. Hannibal launched himself at Will, sending them both tumbling.

"Alpha," Will cried, trying to appeal to protective instincts, "Gentle, please!"

It broke through to Hannibal, but only so much. He was as much a slave to his rut as Will had been to his heat, and though he stopped himself from a punishing bite, he still mounted Will right there on the carpet, the comfort of their nest mere feet away. Will squealed when he shoved in, embarrassingly high pitched. Hannibal felt so much bigger now, now that Will was aware of every single inch and his body was no longer primed to open so easily.

His cock couldn't get hard anymore, and Will was glad for it, he didn't know if he could stay conscious for another orgasm, he felt so full of Hannibal he was surprised he hadn't burst. He cried out with every thrust into him, no longer keening and sweet little things but harsh and sharp whines of pain.

"Stop, *stop* , Hannibal!"

Will dug his nails into the carpet and held on, sobbing when the pace didn't relent, when Hannibal continued to fuck him, to push his body so close to its natural limits Will wanted to *scream* . So he did, the sound drawing long and plaintive before breaking off into shuddering sobs. He rode out the last of Hannibal's claiming entirely pliant and meek on the floor, exhausted.

When Hannibal's lips brushed just beneath his eye, however long later, Will jerked back before blinking himself awake.

Hannibal's eyes were still red, but no longer the bloody pools of need they had been. Will bit his lip and released it with a whine.

"No more," he begged. "No more, Hannibal, I need rest."

"Shh…" Hannibal hushed him, nuzzling their noses together. Will let out a plaintive little sob, spreading his thighs obediently even though it hurt to do even that much.

"Slow?" He begged. Hannibal shook his head, ducking to place a chaste little kiss over the deepest of the bites that littered Will's neck and shoulder.

"No more, sweet Will. We're all done."

It took Will a second to fully believe it, thighs still parted and eyes averted in submission, but when it hit, he began to tremble. His voice left him in a relieved sob, and he reached for Hannibal, attempting to pull him down and allowing himself to be hoisted upwards instead, cradled against Hannibal's chest like a child.

Later, he would look back on this fondly, but for now, all Will could think was that it had hurt, it had been so much, *too much* , and now it was over.

"Such a good boy," Hannibal praised him. They rocked gently in the nest, Will hiding his hiccups against Hannibal's chest. "Offering yourself to me even when you didn't want to. Brave little Omega. Our pups will be so blessed to inherit your fierceness."

Will shivered, feeling inexplicably cold despite how sweaty he was. And he *was* , that and filthy, and smelly, and absolutely awful. He couldn't imagine how Hannibal was holding him so near without pulling back in disgust.

When his breathing finally eased enough that he could speak, Will looked up, leaned back enough to see Hannibal properly through sleepy, hooded eyes. He didn't say anything about pups, he was too tired to even consider that just them, so instead he just pressed to his Alpha

and breathed him in, dozing against him as Hannibal continued to soothe him, waking only when he stood to carry Will to the bathroom to help him bathe.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

“Easy for you to say, you wash clean right away.”

“If I could carry you on my skin always, I would.”

Will rolled his eyes and nipped playfully at Hannibal’s chest. “That’s just one of those post-heat things Alphas have to say, because they’ve been in a thousand Slick Flicks.”

Chapter Notes

Okay so Strats came up with the term Slick Flicks when we were discussing this and it's such a fucking hilarious idea we want to make it a thing XD we've used it a couple times in other ABO stories and it is free for all if you'd like to adopt it too XD

Chick Flicks? Nah. Slick Flicks.

A huge thnk you to Fish for being our badass beta!

Will leaned back with a wince when Hannibal set him down in the bathroom, the tile cool against his feet. Will blinked around the room, having seen literally nothing but the inside of his own for the last three days it looked almost entirely new to him. As Hannibal started the shower, Will rolled his shoulders gently, groaning when his muscles could finally stretch from their cramped position.

Then he looked at Hannibal.

Even without the armor of his suits, Hannibal was extraordinary. Still so poised, so elegant. He moved like a dancer, not like a man of his size usually would, and Will bit his lip gently as his eyes glazed over with pretty daydreams.

“Will,”

He blinked. Hannibal was holding his hand out to him, and Will couldn’t help but smile as he set his own to it. It felt so strangely romantic, stupidly so, but Will didn’t say anything. Because in truth? He was content. He was exhausted and filthy and sore, but he was content. He was safe. He had won his independence, and the protection and love of a powerful Alpha.

By his choice.

He doubted many Omegas at the facility could say that.

The water was lukewarm and Will groaned again, letting it cool his flushed skin, shoving his face immediately under the spray to scrub away the dried blood and tears and sweat before turning to tilt his head back to wet his hair, watching Hannibal through hooded eyes.

Hannibal's hormones had eased, but Will could see the tail end of desire creep up inside him. He hovered just out of the spray, leaving Will to hog the water, to reach to cleanse himself between his thighs.

Startled by what he found there, Will made a face. He'd been a virgin up until he begged Hannibal to have him, and he had never bothered to stop and think about what happened to the mess *afterwards* .

"I'm going to be dripping for *days* ," Will complained.

Hannibal dared to step closer then, pulling Will in against his chest. "I certainly hope so," he murmured into Will's damp hair, and his pleased rumble had Will's eyes drifting shut. Hannibal smelled and felt like safety. "I like you smelling of me."

"Easy for you to say, *you* wash clean right away."

"If I could carry you on my skin always, I would."

Will rolled his eyes and nipped playfully at Hannibal's chest. "That's just one of those post-heat things Alphas *have* to say, because they've been in a thousand Slick Flicks."

Hannibal hummed and set his knuckles beneath Will's chin to lift it, smiling at him when Will blinked up at him. "I've never seen one," he confided, and Will grinned, laughing.

"Bullshit."

"Scout's honor, not a single one."

Will laughed brighter, hands touching Hannibal gently, slipping over his wet skin, just being *near* felt good. He didn't turn his head away, didn't duck it out of Hannibal's gentle grip. He bit his lip instead, and just watched him. He realized, with a shock, that Hannibal had touched his lips to every part of him he could reach, except his mouth. Will's blush crept on him quick, putting his freckles into stark relief. Hannibal groaned lowly, pleased.

"Beautiful boy," he murmured, watching Will blink in sleepy pleasure at the words. He brought up his other hand, set both on either side of Will's face, and leaned in to press their lips together in a gentle and chaste caress. "My beautiful boy."

Will made a soft, helpless noise, lifting up onto his toes to steal another kiss, and then another. Hannibal held him tight under the spray, let him have as much affection as he wanted. His fingers traced gently over Will's bitemark, sweetly possessive.

After a long moment, Will pried himself away with a sorrowful sigh. He wanted to keep touching, taking in Hannibal's scent and taste, but if it went on any further, he would only be

crying again.

Hannibal nuzzled against his jaw and then ran strong hands through his hair, undoing tangles and reaching for the shampoo. He washed Will thoroughly, without taking liberties or pushing Will towards anything more. By the end, Will was drifting, happy to let Hannibal pull him from the shower and dry him for bed.

“Will you be mad if it doesn’t take?” Will whispered softly. Hannibal had tucked him into his own side of the bed, letting Will nuzzle into a pillow that smelled thoroughly of his Alpha.

“What’s that, sweet boy?” Hannibal slid into bed beside him, curling around Will’s back with a possessive hand over his belly.

“If I’m not… If it didn’t…” Will drew in a slow breath and made himself say it. “If I’m not pregnant. Will you be mad? Some Alphas…”

Hannibal stilled behind him for a moment, a ripple of tension pulling his muscles from laxity, then he sighed, spreading his fingers from Will’s groin to his sternum, holding him close.

“I didn’t lie,” he murmured, “when I promised you I wanted you for more than your fertility.”

“I know,” Will still wasn’t sure, but he could swallow that lie for the moment. “But -”

“I would like us to have a family,” Hannibal continued gently, “I would like to give you pups, but we have time yet for that. Not all Omegas take on their first bonded heat.” He kissed behind Will’s ear and nuzzled there. “I won’t be mad, Will. Never over this. Never over something you can’t control.”

Will swallowed, turned his face into the pillow a moment more before wriggling around to face Hannibal instead, hands tucked between them, looking up at him with curious, wide eyes.

“What about study?”

“What about study,” Hannibal replied, amusement curling his tone. Will tried not to smile, schooled his expression instead into one of bored indifference.

“Could I study at a college?”

“I see no reason why you can’t apply to,” Hannibal answered, stroking his curls back and letting them bounce down to Will’s forehead again, as stubborn as the boy who wore them. “You have proven to me beyond any doubt, clever thing, that your independence is worth the investment.”

Will bit his lip, uncertain. Hannibal’s offers of independence had been dependent on Will’s resistance, his ability to keep himself separate from Hannibal, an ability he had not displayed. Hannibal reached up to brush his thumb over the apple of Will’s cheek.

“I’ve no intention of seeing you whither,” he told Will. “I want to see you bloom, to be brilliant and happy.”

Will flushed, ducking his head with a pleased shyness.

“I would have you continue to live in the house, of course,” Hannibal added, “But you have your online courses, and there are plenty of schools within driving distance.”

Will had neither expected nor wanted to go away to school. It was generally considered a poor idea for Omegas, and now that they had bonded, Will wasn’t sure he could bear to be away from Hannibal for so long.

“We’ll have to get you a car,” Hannibal added, “Our schedules are likely to overlap too much for me to drive you.”

Will stared at him, suddenly wide awake.

“I can’t drive,”

“I’ll teach you.”

“Hannibal,” Will pushed himself back a little, enough to properly look at him, enough to make sure that Hannibal knew this wasn’t just a silly whim of a post-heat Omega. He wanted to make sure it wasn’t false promises from an Alpha just out of rut, either. “Do you hear yourself?”

“Yes,” Hannibal blinked at him. “And I did promise.”

“But I -” Will looked away for a moment, wondering why he was *upset* when he was getting everything he wanted, *and* giving Hannibal just as much as he wanted too. It just felt too easy, it shouldn’t be so easy to just… work like this, should it?

It never had been before.

“You were more than two days into your heat, Will,” Hannibal reminded him, “I consider that not only your victory but a feat of immeasurable strength.”

Will flushed, pleased, and flicked his eyes to Hannibal again. Warm eyes, soft eyes, familiar eyes that Will had been catching more and more as they settled into a routine together. He sighed.

“I knew,” he said quietly, “the first day when you didn’t break down the door, when you didn’t try to shove your way in when I opened it to get the food and the sheets, I knew I’d let you. I knew I wanted you to claim me.”

Hannibal drew in a breath, took in the thick scent of Will’s pleasure, his contentment. He was sweetest like this. Happy, comfortable, he smelled better than he had in weeks. Better than when his heat had been at his peak. “I keep my promises, Will. You were so very difficult to resist, but I have never wanted you to be frightened of me.”

“I’ve never been frightened of you,” Will insisted, stubborn to the end. Hannibal didn’t call him out on it. “You kept me safe. Even from yourself. You kept your promise, and you’ve

given me so much more than I expected from you. I-" Will's words trailed off unexpectedly into a yawn. Hannibal chuckled and pressed a kiss to his forehead.

"As much as I enjoy hearing you extol my virtues, you need to rest. You're exhausted, Will. And possibly dehydrated. Rest and fluids."

Will gave him a sleepy nod, pressing his face into Hannibal's chest.

A few weeks later, the test came up positive. So did the second, and the third that Will took in a sudden, disbelieving panic.

He'd been nauseous for days, unable to keep things down, no matter what Hannibal made. He realized now that he'd been hoping for illness, for food poisoning. He didn't know what to do with *this* .

Will hadn't thought this through. They hadn't *discussed* it. He had no idea what Hannibal's idea of parenting was, what he would want for his children.

How much he would *sell* an Omega son for.

Will kept that test, kept the other two, and crawled into bed for a few hours, just staring into space. He didn't know what to do. While Hannibal took care of *him* , and was accepting of Will's eccentricities as his mate, would he be so welcoming of them in his children? He said he wanted a family, that he wanted to give Will pups but he never said *why* . Someone of Hannibal's class, of his breeding…

Will pushed himself up to stagger to the bathroom where he was sick again.

This was meant to be good news. This should be incredible news.

By the time Hannibal got home, Will was near-manic in his attempt to not panic. He drove himself into Hannibal's arms hard enough to knock him back a step and clung to him, offering nothing more than a wide-eyed gaze when Hannibal said his name.

"Are you alright?"

"Yes, fine, perfectly fine, I missed you."

Hannibal hesitated before petting slowly through Will's hair, eyes studying his expression, his forced casualness. Perhaps he'd not done well on a paper, he knew now how obsessively Will wanted to be perfect in all his studies, as though to prove to everyone that he was worthy of a degree. Perhaps he'd just had a bad day.

Hannibal bent to kiss his forehead and Will tried to resist it, he tried -

"I have something to tell you, but I have to ask you something first."

He hadn't meant to say it. He'd hoped to keep things a secret for at least a little longer, until he could figure out what he wanted to say. But it was out now, and Hannibal was looking at

him with concern.

“Will, I’m sure one poor grade won’t-”

“I don’t want you to sell my children!”

Hannibal blinked at him. For once, he seemed at a loss for words. Tears brimmed in the corners of Will’s eyes; he wiped them away with a huff of frustration.

“Will.”

“I won’t let you,” Will said, finding his courage. He pushed away from Hannibal, arms wrapped protectively around his middle. “I won’t, I swear I’ll run.”

“ *Will* .”

“I’ll pack them up and I’ll run, and I’ll keep running every time they haul me back, I won’t *let you* -”

“Will!”

The stern, commanding Alpha tone stopped Will in his tracks. Nervous and scared and *pregnant* , his instincts were running on high, begging him to behave, to appease his Alpha, to obey. He tilted his head with a whine, baring the scars on his throat for Hannibal’s approval.

Hannibal stepped close again and brought Will into an embrace, guiding him to nuzzle against the scent gland at his throat until Will was trembling slightly but no longer shaking. Hannibal stroked his hair, pulled back to look at his Omega with concern.

“Where did that come from?” he asked.

“I won’t,” Will repeated, quieter, now, but his eyes no less set.

“I have no intention of harming any pups we might ever have,” Hannibal assured him. “Dowries are an archaic concept I’ve never been fond of. Even with you it was,” he sighed. “Why is this panicking you now, beautiful thing? Why -” he stopped a moment, eyes still on Will’s, but narrowing now as Will continued to stare back. He breathed in, a deliberate, slow inhale and Will bit his lip. He didn’t step back, didn’t pull away again. He’d said what he needed to say and now Hannibal… Hannibal would only have himself to blame if he chose to go against Will’s wishes.

“Will,” Hannibal’s hands were gentle against his face, down his arms, following them to where Will was still holding himself protectively. He moved them only enough for Hannibal to spread his hand over Will’s belly. “Will, are you -”

“Yes,” Will whispered, eyes looking between Hannibal’s, unable to look away from him, terrified of seeing a lie cross it too quickly to catch. He was about to say more but Hannibal was hugging him again, holding him so securely, so softly as he murmured praise and adoration against Will’s hair.

“Extraordinary, you extraordinary thing,” he told him, moving to kneel in front of Will, uncaring for his suit, uncaring for anything but his beautiful Omega, *pregnant* , in front of him. He pressed his forehead to Will’s belly and nuzzled there, arms heavy over Will’s hips as he held him close.

He heard Will take in a sharp breath, but Hannibal was still distracted by seeking out the slightest curve of his stomach. There wouldn’t be one, of course, not so early, but Hannibal imagined he could see the tiniest bit of swelling. He shoved Will’s shirt up, pressing kisses right below his navel.

Will giggled helplessly, his eyes watering again. If he’d thought, for even a moment, that Hannibal might have wanted to breed him and then have nothing more to do with it, that fear was dashed soundly. Hannibal trailed his lips over Will’s stomach, stopping occasionally to take a deep breath, as if he could already scent their pup and not just the slight change in Will’s hormones.

Hannibal had been right when he’d said that most Omegas didn’t take in their first bonded heat. It often took a few cycles before they were properly primed for their Alpha. Some were lucky, though, or unlucky, depending on how one looked at it.

Will was lucky. Will was unbelievably lucky.

“Don’t look so happy,” He said, laughing. “It’s already throwing tantrums. It won’t let me eat anything.”

“I’ll find you something,” Hannibal promised fervently. “I’ll make sure the both of you are fed and safe.”

Will slipped his fingers into Hannibal’s hair, stroking it gently as Hannibal continued to nuzzle Will, to touch his stomach, as though he could coax movement or anything at all from the tiny thing within Will. When Hannibal stood again he took Will’s face in his hands and kissed him deeply, adoring him in any way he possibly could.

His beautiful, beautiful boy was going to give him a pup, was going to be so beautiful as his belly grew, as he flushed and squirmed and reached for Hannibal in that gorgeous needy way he had. Oh, he was lovely. He was so, so lovely. When Will laughed again and gently batted Hannibal away, he went, just far enough to be within arm’s reach, and stroked beneath Will’s chin until the other lifted it with a smile.

“Are you happy?” Hannibal asked him, watching the way Will’s smile eased, but not in displeasure, just in contemplation. After a moment Will nodded, eyes bright, and stepped close to press himself against his Alpha again.

“You asked me if I’d always known I didn’t want pups,” Will mumbled against him. “I lied and told you I’d never wanted them. I just… I never thought I would find a place to have them that would be so safe. You’re so safe.”

Hannibal purred, that warm, all-encompassing sound that made Will feel sleepy with comfort. It carried through his chest, against Will where he nuzzled him. He couldn’t control

it if he tried; Hannibal was ecstatic. He had always wanted a family of his own, he had always wanted to raise pups with a partner, to watch them grow, to support them on their way. Some of his contemporaries had started complaining early when their pups were born girls, or Omega, that it was a trend of late that less Alphas were born, and could it be down to dirty bloodlines on the Omegan side?

Hannibal had never put much thought in who he would have, just that he would love them, and the Omega who gave them to him. He nuzzled Will and kissed him again, and again, over and over until both were laughing and Will was pulling away again, drawing a hand through his hair and sighing, contented.

“Let’s see if it will let me eat fruit,” he suggested with a helpless shrug. Hannibal hurried to comply.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

> *“It’s always your mouth, isn’t it, that gets you into so much trouble,” Hannibal told him, and there was fondness there, enough to pull a blush to Will’s cheeks. He didn’t answer. He didn’t know if he was supposed to. “Come here.”*
>
> Will's pregnancy cravings get him into a bit of trouble.

I would kill for some potato chips right now

I’m not bringing you potato chips, Will.

If I’m craving it, the pup will probably let me eat it.

The pup also lets you eat fruit. I will happily bring you more raspberries.

I need salt, Hannibal.

No.

Will considered the message, his hand rubbing over the slight pouch his stomach was beginning to develop. Then he considered the walking distance from their home to the convenience store. Hannibal had given him a credit card, after all.

When Hannibal returned home, Will had already hidden his snacks, carefully sequestering them in one of the unused cabinets in the guest bedroom, the room that had formerly been his. He’d washed his hands and brushed his teeth thoroughly, and was disguising any lingering traces of grease with a mouthful of fresh-cut cantaloupe. He beamed up at Hannibal from his seat at the table. Hannibal did not look nearly as impressed, setting his cell phone down on the table. He had a bank statement open on the screen, and he tapped pointedly at a line on the screen, describing a gas station purchase.

“You don’t drive, Will,” He said, slowly and evenly.

Will made a soft sound and looked up at Hannibal through his fringe. “I didn’t drive,” he told him. It had been the truth, after all, he’d walked there. It hardly placated Hannibal who merely raised an eyebrow. Will felt that ache at the back of his throat to tell him the truth, to whine and plead and pathetically prostrate himself in front of Hannibal for mercy.

He’d never been good at listening to that voice.

“Will.” Hannibal’s tone brooked no argument and Will licked his lips.

“I really wanted some,” he murmured, at least trying to look guilty. “I didn’t eat much, I supplemented with fruit, with everything you let me eat, Hannibal, it won’t be bad for me just the one time.”

“Maybe not for you, no.”

Will scoffed. “One bag of chips won’t ruin our pup, Hannibal. What was I expected to do?”

“As you were told,” Hannibal said firmly. He was, all things considered, a fairly easy-going Alpha, but Will had known before he mated with him that he was a traditionalist. He squirmed uncomfortably in his seat.

“You were being unreasonable.”

“A discussion we could have had when I came home.” Hannibal reached for the back of Will’s neck. Knowing full well what he’d gotten himself into, Will didn’t fight the tight grip over his nape. “What did I say when you agreed to stay, Will?”

“That there would be consequences for my actions,” Will mumbled sheepishly towards the table. He remembered very well what sort of consequences had come before, the ache and heat in the pit of his stomach.

That wouldn’t work this time, though. He couldn’t drape himself across Hannibal’s lap with his stomach jerking into his knees. He looked up at Hannibal, alarmed.

“I would never do anything to harm our pup,” Hannibal assured him. “Upstairs, Will.”

Will whined softly but obeyed. As soon as Hannibal let him go, Will stood, turned his head in a simple, gentle touch against his Alpha before moving to take the stairs. He could still move without trouble, didn’t walk funny, didn’t feel too heavy, but he was starting to realize the enormity of what his body was capable of as Hannibal’s pup grew within him.

At the top of the stairs he went immediately to their room; Hannibal wouldn’t mean for Will to go anywhere else ‘upstairs’. And there he waited, hands caught against each other, fingers tugging nervous little jerking motions together in front of him, then behind his back, then in front of him again.

Surely he hadn’t angered Hannibal *that much* over a packet of chips. If he did, he’d certainly need to get rid of the rest of his stash before Hannibal smelled it out. Or admit to having one, he supposed, that would be worth just as much trouble. Will was still mulling it all over in his head when Hannibal came upstairs, and Will turned to him, brows furrowed.

He wasn’t frightened of him, Hannibal didn’t give off anything to suggest Will had something to fear, but he was unhappy, and the very thought that Will had done that made him squirm. He watched Hannibal approach, proud, tall, beautiful; much stronger than Will could ever even hope to be, but he had never used that strength against him, not once.

“It’s always your mouth, isn’t it, that gets you into so much trouble,” Hannibal told him, and there was fondness there, enough to pull a blush to Will’s cheeks. He didn’t answer. He didn’t

know if he was supposed to. “Come here.”

Hannibal guided Will to kneel beside the bed, taking a seat in front of him. Will looked up, brow furrowed, but things clicked into place when Hannibal began to undo his belt.

Pleasuring Hannibal wasn’t much of a punishment. Will had done it before, as a precursor to sex, and he enjoyed it. He supposed Hannibal was going to deny him his own pleasure. Uncomfortable, but manageable.

“Open, sweet boy.” Will dropped his jaw, his palms resting on his thighs. Hannibal cupped his skull, guiding him down until Hannibal’s cock brushed along his tongue.

Hannibal was large, perfectly fitting the Alpha stereotype. Will could swallow him entirely, but it was difficult. He was still practicing. He was fortunate in that he *liked* doing this for Hannibal, liked making his breath hitch and his grip tighten.

“Good boy, Will. Be still. Let me take you as I like.”

Will blinked up at him, obedient, and relaxed his throat as Hannibal started to thrust into his mouth. Hannibal had never been cruel here. Passionate, certainly, but he had never forced Will beyond his limits. They had teased and played, Will always entirely too pleased with himself when Hannibal was growling for him to turn over, to let Hannibal have him as he wanted.

Now, he wasn’t cruel either, and Will felt a rush of pleasure as Hannibal’s cock thickened in his mouth. He was doing this. He was bringing his Alpha pleasure with his obedience and his desire for him. If this was the punishment for unorthodox dietary choices as dictated by one Hannibal Lecter, Will was sure he would be able to suffer the consequences often and without issue.

He let himself enjoy this, moaning around Hannibal, his hands flexing in his own lap as his cock stirred in his pants. Heat was always a painful, muddy experience of obsessive need, but pregnancy had proven to be quite the driver to ramp up Will’s libido; he was damn near ravenous for Hannibal several times a week at least, if not daily.

He wanted to reach up and touch Hannibal’s thighs, spread his little hands over him and coax him to forgiveness quickly. But when he did reach, Hannibal gently caught his hands and guided them down again. Will looked up and Hannibal just shook his head, a look in his eye that Will hadn’t seen before; not angry, not disappointed, not *hungry* exactly but… close.

As Hannibal’s cock filled further, and Will found it harder to suck him down, his Alpha clicked his tongue to get Will’s attention.

“As I like, Will,” he reminded him. Will moaned quietly around him, blinking rapidly. This was when he often pulled away, he could feel Hannibal’s knot swelling at the base of his cock when it bumped up against his chin and Will tried again, just gently, to pull back.

Another click of Hannibal’s tongue, this time accompanied by a hand tightening in Will’s hair. Hannibal’s other hand cupped Will’s jaw, and Will made a confused, unsettled whine.

“Hush. You know I wouldn’t do anything that would harm you.”

Will knew that, but as a firm grip pried his jaw wider, it became suddenly difficult to remember. Hannibal’s knot brushed against his teeth on one thrust, and just barely squeezed past them on the next. Hannibal held Will’s head tight, his nose buried in his pubic hair. With mingled arousal and horror, Will realized where this was going.

Hannibal’s knot already seemed impossibly large, but it swelled further as he began to come, stretching Will’s jaw as wide as it would go, firmly locked into place behind his teeth. Will swallowed frantically, the head of Hannibal’s cock lodged in his throat, spilling wave after wave of fluid. Will struggled to catch his breath, only barely able to draw in a wet, shuddering breath when Hannibal’s twitching cock finally stilled. He whined, blinking up at his Alpha.

Hannibal’s hand soothed over Will’s cheek and patted it gently. “Just like that, Will. I’ll put that mouth to good use, if you insist on running it so.”

Will’s brows drew higher and he whined again, finding just amusement in Hannibal’s eyes as he tilted his head. Will could breathe, but barely, he could taste Hannibal at the back of his throat, and every time he tried to swallow, his Alpha purred in pleasure.

Will knew how long Hannibal’s knot could last. He’d been pressed back against him, fucked out and greedy for it for hours before, but surely Hannibal wouldn’t hold him on his knees for that long…

“I do not want you to do certain things not to be contrary, Will,” Hannibal continued, voice almost pleasant if not rough with arousal. The sound pulled down Will’s spine and tugged his little cock to attention again. “I do it for your betterment. There are ways to sate cravings without putting poison into your body.”

Will rolled his eyes, he couldn’t help it, and immediately regretted his petulance. Hannibal’s hand slapped against his cheek, just enough to surprise, just enough to sting, and then Hannibal’s fingers were in Will’s hair and he was pulling him impossibly closer and Will was choking as Hannibal filled his mouth and throat with seed again.

The next sound Will made was a whimper.

“If you disagree with something I’ve said, you’re free to discuss it with me. You are *not* free to run wild and sneak around behind my back. And every time you do, you’ll end up back here, on your knees.”

Will’s next whimper was closer to a moan. He couldn’t stop himself. He was helpless to resist arousal, when Hannibal was proving his strength and his ability to protect by taking Will so firmly in hand. He was torn between being obedient and waiting for the knot to go down, or fighting and squirming until Hannibal fucked his throat constantly, drew his punishment out with wave after wave of salty, bitter fluid.

Will disliked that Hannibal was old-fashioned enough to believe in disciplining Omegas, but it didn’t stop his little cock from hardening, from jutting up between his thighs as he

squirmed, unable to seek relief.

“I think I like you like this,” Hannibal decided, running his fingers through Will’s hair. “Perhaps you’d benefit from an occasional reminder of my expectations for your behavior.”

Will’s eyes closed as he moaned, his cheeks aflame as Hannibal continued to pet him, as his cock continued to tease and tickle the back of Will’s throat. Will squeezed his thighs together, slipped his hands between them to have something to rut against. He heard Hannibal’s intake of breath, heard his low growl of warning and tried, he *tried* to stop, but he was so close, so achingly close.

“This is punishment, Will,” Hannibal reminded him, the toe of his shoe gently kicking at his knees until Will spread them, wantonly wide again, his hands flat to the floor as he looked up at Hannibal with wide, desperate eyes. “Bad boy, no touching.”

Will whimpered and tried to appeal to him with eager obedience, trying to suck where his tongue could reach, trying to stimulate Hannibal with the vibrations of his throat. When Hannibal set his shoe between Will’s legs, pressing rhythmically against Will’s cock, Will whined and came with a cry, shuddering.

Hannibal kept his foot where it was, just a tad too much pressure on Will’s sensitive body, and used his grip on Will’s hair to fuck his throat again, short, abortive little motions restricted by the knot. He made Will gag on his pleasure, holding him still for the pulses.

“You’re a mess,” he lectured as Will swallowed frantically, “and far too much of a temptation. Next time, you’ll be bound as well.”

Will moaned around him, his eyes fluttering closed.

It seemed to take forever for Hannibal’s knot to go down, and when it did, Will was wordless, making soft little whimpers as he was hauled up from the floor onto the bed. Hannibal kicked his shoes off and climbed up next to him, teasing at the wet spot he’d left on the front of his slacks. Will trembled as Hannibal rubbed against him, feeling out the shape of his spent cock.

“What am I going to do with you?” Hannibal mused. “You’re far too sweet and needy to punish properly. I shouldn’t have let you come. Look what you’ve done to me, beautiful boy.”

Will’s jaw ached, it hurt so much. He rocked his hips up into Hannibal’s touch and turned his face into his throat and just breathed against him. He felt so full of him, so entirely full, and laughed weakly when he realized that he had, after all, gotten something salty like he’d wanted.

Will was growing bigger, and despite it all he *ached* for Hannibal’s cock.

More often than not, he could nip that need in the bud by using a toy, stroking himself when Hannibal was at work. By the time his Alpha was home, the fire was dulled somewhat, and

Will could at least hold a proper conversation before they ate and went to bed. Some days, he was completely out of control with need.

This was one of those days.

Will was almost vibrating by the time Hannibal's car pulled into the drive, and when Hannibal opened the door Will was on him, hands at his lapels, tugging him down to kiss him, sloppy and messy and desperate. When he let him breathe, Will looked at his Alpha, his eyes bright with gold, teeth bared in a pleased little growl.

"I want you to chase me," he breathed. "And *if* you can catch me, I want you to fuck me so hard I lose my voice and forget my own name," Will leaned close to tug Hannibal's bottom lip between his teeth, goading him into a chase, into a game as he let go and made for the stairs.

Hannibal's playful growl echoed after him. Will laughed breathlessly, stumbling over the top step, his socks slipping on the wooden floor.

He couldn't have outrun Hannibal on a normal day, let alone while carrying so much extra weight around his middle. Hannibal caught him just outside their bedroom door, his hands gentle even as he pinned Will to the wall. Clever fingers slid under Will's waistband, cupping and teasing his cock while Hannibal's other hand pet possessively over his stomach.

"I'm going to make you scream." Hannibal's teeth found Will's jaw, drawing a slow scrape over sensitive skin. "Poor little Omega, I'm going to tear you apart."

Will moaned, writhing back against the bulge in Hannibal's slacks. Hannibal's hand slid up to gently wrap around Will's throat, using the grip to guide him into their room.

Pregnancy had been an exercise in creativity. The curve of Will's stomach prevented traditional mounting positions, at least comfortably, and he could only stay on his back for so long before it started to ache. Instead, Hannibal hauled Will over his lap, grinding up against his still-clothed ass. He could smell Will's slick, his arousal. It was all over the bed, his poor boy must have been desperate for him.

"Take everything off," Hannibal commanded, "I want to see you."

Will grinned, nodding quickly as his fingers worked over the buttons of his shirt, just the first few so he could yank it over his head. He'd taken to wearing some of Hannibal's clothes, as his own grew too tight, and part of the thrill was seeing Hannibal respond; Will treated Hannibal's clothes as he did his own.

As he revealed his belly, Hannibal set both hands to it, stroking lovingly over the bulge of it. Will had filled out quickly and significantly, and Hannibal felt an incredible surge of pride every time he saw him, knowing it was his seed that had made his Omega so beautiful, his pups within growing strong.

Will bit his lip and squirmed around to get his pants free, laughing when he nearly upended himself to the bed. But with Hannibal's help he was quickly bare, and back to straddling his

mate. Will was flushed with need, spreading his slick over Hannibal's thigh where he ground down against him, uncaring for the damage it would do to the Alpha's clothes. His eyes, hooded and dark, were flecked with gold where Hannibal could see, and Will smiled, lazy and slow, as he rolled his hips for him.

"Alpha," he whined, affecting the soft, sweet little tone so stereotypical to his dynamic. "Alpha please,"

Will had learned to use Hannibal's affection against him, and Hannibal had not the slightest bit of regret. He shoved his own pants down and off, nipping playfully at Will's shoulder when he refused to lift off Hannibal's lap.

"Needy, impatient little thing." Hannibal wrapped his hand around Will's cock, thumbing at the damp head until Will whined. "If you'd behaved, you'd have what you needed by now."

"You like me better when I'm trouble," Will said, raising up onto his knees and reaching back for Hannibal's cock. He sank down in a slow, steady drop, moaning happily as he was filled.

Hannibal felt so much deeper like this, bigger somehow. It would be harder to knot, but lately Will couldn't hold a position long enough to make knotting feasible.

"I thought you were going to make me scream," Will teased, "Why am I doing all the work?"

Pregnancy had given him confidence to use his petulance for play, and with his 'condition' Hannibal was far more forgiving of certain tendencies of Will's he would usually not be so lenient with. He grasped Will's hips and guided him up, thrusting his cock deep into him as Will sank down again, head back and throat bared as he moaned.

He was exceptional, Hannibal could not stop looking at him. As he fucked into his willing, wanton little Omega he took in every detail, every aspect. The way Will trembled with need, the way his fingers flexed and stretched; over Hannibal's chest, leaving tiny little marks with his nails, the sounds he made, loud and pleased and carrying. Will's swelling belly, too, was such a turn on for Hannibal some days he didn't know what to do with himself. He'd traced every delicate blue vein across its surface with his tongue, he'd pressed his ear to it to listen for every gurgle and shift of blood and his pup within.

His pup, growing healthy and plump every day.

He moved Will with ease, his strength palpable as he moved him how he wanted, pushing Will down onto his cock, teasing the rim with the knot until Will's cries were close to the screams he'd been promised. He wouldn't knot, only because Will wouldn't be able to stay balanced atop for the time it took for Hannibal's knot to ease, but once the pup was born, once Will's body was his own again…

Every tease of Hannibal's knot just made Will want it more. He was going to be a desperate mess by the time this pregnancy was over. He arched his back, thighs beginning to tremble as Hannibal moved him.

Hannibal lifted him like he weighed nothing, moving and manipulating Will's body for his own pleasure. His strength sent another surge of pleasure through Will. He had never wanted an Alpha before, but now he had one who could overpower Will and foster his independence in equal measures. It was everything Will had ever wanted, and he loved it, he loved *Hannibal-*

Will ceased his wriggling in Hannibal's grasp, and though Hannibal continued his motions, Will seemed to be lost. Hannibal stopped, Will still seated astride him. "Will?"

Tears pricked at the corners of Will's eyes, and he drew in a shaky, watery breath. He had no idea why he was crying, he was so damn *happy.*

"Sweet boy -"

"I love you," Will told him, blinking quickly to try and stop the tears before they started. He laughed, shaking his head. "I love you, Hannibal."

His Alpha was still for a moment, eyes wide, red-ringed and gorgeous, and then Hannibal's hands were on Will's face, his lips were on Will's own, and Will's entire body felt like it would burst with the overwhelming *rightness* of everything. He clung back, squirming his hips against Hannibal's cock where it sat buried deep within him, the knot pulsing softly with how close, how needy the Omega was for it.

Will pulled from the kiss with a whine and pressed his face against Hannibal's throat. "Alpha," he shivered, wrapping his arms tight around Hannibal's shoulders. " *Knot* , please -"

Hannibal growled, low and pleased and possessive, and grasped Will's form to hold him still, thrusting into him hard, almost painfully hard, until he felt Will's muscles give, just a little, just enough, and shoved deep into him, knot sealing in the seed Hannibal pumped into his willing and beautiful partner.

Will shuddered, nails dragging over Hannibal's shoulders through his shirt, moaning softly as he was filled, as the pup in his belly shifted just a little, as though responding to the two of them at once. Hannibal held him, so secure, so safe, so warm, and Will felt himself start to purr, nuzzling needily against his mate as Hannibal kissed over his face, his hair, Will's fingers when he freed his arms from around himself and held Will in his lap.

"Beautiful Will," he praised him, nuzzling beneath his chin, kissing reverently over his bite mark. "I love you."

Will's answer was another nuzzle, his purr rumbling through them both. He'd never felt so safe, so protected. Held here, in the curl of his Alpha's body, everything was perfect.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

> *They had the same Beta as their ultrasound technician as last time, a soft-spoken and very well dressed young woman who seemed to truly be excited any time she could show new parents their pups. When Will lay back with a groan, she gently took his hand to squeeze, offering a smile.*
>
> *“Let’s see that pup of yours,” she said, eyes to Hannibal as she spoke. “Would you like to know the sex?”*
>
> *“Please,” Hannibal smiled.*

Chapter Notes

> Some good (surprise) news for our boys!

Will felt *huge* .

He knew that the feeling was completely normal for a pregnancy, but he’d thought he would make it a bit longer before the feeling set in. He was barely four months along now, and he looked like he’d swallowed a bowling ball. He’d never spent any time around other pregnant Omegas, but he’d thought he’d be a bit smaller at this stage.

Hannibal loved it, of course. He loved any excuse to wrap Will up in one of his sweaters and get his hands all over Will’s belly. He was *obsessed* , and it would have been nauseating if it wasn’t so cute.

They were finding out the sex today. There would be pictures. They’d get to *see* their pup, instead of just hearing the rapid heartbeat.

Will’s hands were shaking and sweaty by the time Hannibal helped him out of the car. Hannibal treated him like he was so breakable, lately. That, too, would have been nauseating if it wasn’t so sweet.

They had the same Beta as their ultrasound technician as last time, a soft-spoken and very well dressed young woman who seemed to truly be excited any time she could show new parents their pups. When Will lay back with a groan, she gently took his hand to squeeze, offering a smile.

“Let’s see that pup of yours,” she said, eyes to Hannibal as she spoke. “Would you like to know the sex?”

“Please,” Hannibal smiled. They had talked about it, Hannibal had found that once in a while Will’s panic over the gender and presentation of their pup came up like lava from stone and he had to repeatedly soothe him. He understood, on a base, instinctual level, that Will’s concerns were founded, that his own childhood and even their bonding was rooted in a society that put a price on matches, rather than an emotional element.

He knew it was nothing to do with Hannibal himself.

He stroked a hand through Will’s hair and sat beside him, clasping one of Will’s hands, nose gentle in the little curls just behind his ear.

Will chewed his lip absently as the lubricant was spread over the swell of his stomach, as the Beta took up the ultrasound wand to draw over his skin. They heard the heartbeat first, rapid and strong, and Will squeezed Hannibal’s hand almost painfully hard. It was magical, somehow entirely unreal, that this was happening, that this was *theirs* .

“Hmm…” The tech said, a small, tight frown crossing her features. “That sounds a little fast.”

Will’s own heart rate doubled, and his grip on Hannibal’s hand became painful. Somehow, he’d done it wrong, he was sure. Things had been going too well, he’d gotten to complacent. Something *had* to go wrong now. He wasn’t exercising enough, or he’d been sneaking too many potato chips, or-

“Let me just…” The tech twisted the wand a bit, applying pressure to a place that made Will wince and the pup kick in displeasure. “Oh. Well, hello there!”

“What?” Will asked, his voice barely above a whisper. He turned his head towards the screen, squinting at what he saw there. Too many arms, too many legs.

“Congratulations,” the tech said cheerfully, “you’re having two little boys.”

Will’s eyes widened, his breathing stopped, he was sure his heart did, too, for a moment.

Two.

Two pups .

They were having *two little boys* .

“Oh my god,” he sighed, mouth splitting into a grin as the image on the screen became even clearer and Will could *see them* . Two tiny little things, so tiny they shouldn’t take up the space they did in Will’s body, pressed up close, limbs in a tangle together. Will’s vision blurred for a moment and he blinked tears away before turning to Hannibal, purring so loudly he didn’t think he’d hear anything else, even as the Beta kept gently pointing out the limbs and positions of their boys.

Their boys .

Will nuzzled against his Alpha until Hannibal's face turned against him too, a hand coming to cup Will's face as he kissed him. Hannibal smelled like joy, bright and almost sharp in its flavor, but so truly contented.

"We're having two," Will laughed against him.

"You are a wonder," Hannibal praised. Will could feel a hand twitching against his side, no doubt resisting the urge to disrupt the technician and cup Will's belly again.

"What do we even do with *two?"* Will said, shaking his head with a smile so broad it ached.

"Well, I believe our shopping list has unexpectedly doubled."

They went home with pictures of their boys -their *boys!* - which Hannibal promptly found a frame for. There had been a lot of discussion about what could be expected, namely regarding size, due dates, and potential bed rest for the last few weeks. There was a chance their pups would come early, and it made Will slightly dizzy to think about it.

"Two cribs are *not* going to fit in our bedroom with that samurai suit in there," he told Hannibal, mentally rearranging their original plan.

Hannibal hummed, an acknowledgement that he was listening while Will spoke his worries aloud. It helped him, Hannibal knew, he'd been on the receiving end of a panicked rant only to hear it end in calm determination when Will realized there was nothing to fear. If it helped his mate deal with being overwhelmed, he would listen.

But in truth there was more on his mind than the suit of armor, or the precarious staircase, or the huge number of rugs about the house that were not anchored down by anything, making them a slip risk. He was thinking of reinforcing the door, perhaps getting someone in to replace it entirely with a better, stronger model. He'd also considered updating their security system, something that would monitor within as well as without, allowing Hannibal to keep an eye on everything when he was out of the house.

"They could share the room that was mine once they're old enough to," Will was saying, hands fiddling with a bit of ribbon he'd picked up somewhere. He was fraying the end so methodically Hannibal wondered if he even realized he was doing it. "Bunks maybe? Kids love bunk beds."

"Those are dangerous," Hannibal pointed out quietly, but Will's response wasn't to agree, but to laugh.

"Everything is dangerous, Hannibal," he pointed out. "Life is known to end in death in 100% of cases."

"Still, no need to increase the odds." Would Will be able to make it up the stairs in the last few weeks? Hannibal supposed they could nest in the study. Will would no doubt need his

rest after the pups were born, and this way Hannibal could have everyone together where he could see them.

“Hannibal. Promise me you won’t be helicopter Dad.”

“Of course not.” Hannibal was barely listening. The more he thought about it, the better it sounded. He had plenty of soft bedding in preparation for Will’s heats. They would hardly be the first to build a traditional family nest instead of using cribs.

Baby monitors came with video cameras now. He could set one up a bit early and keep an eye on Will, in case something happened while he was studying and he needed his Alpha.

Studying. Will was going to have to put off the on-campus courses he’d wanted to take until the boys were a little older. Hannibal was not having his heavily pregnant Omega in public transportation, surrounded by health hazards and bus steps he could fall down.

“Hannibal, I’m talking to you!”

“I think you should stay home for a while,” Hannibal replied, apropos of nothing. He turned to where Will was sitting, watched his expression turn to confusion and braced his hands against the back of the sofa opposite. “I’m sure certain courses that you cannot take through distance learning can be supplemented for the time being.”

“I don’t go anywhere,” Will pointed out slowly, brow raising. “Unless we go together, I’ve got nowhere to go particularly.”

“That settles it then.”

“Hannibal,” Will’s face was set to something that hinted at the beginning of a stormcloud of annoyance. “What are you doing?”

“We’ll relocate to the study,” Hannibal continued, as though Will hadn’t spoken, and that more than anything riled Will up the most. “Set up a nest to share, one we can perfect for the time the pups come. Many cribs these days don’t meet the safety standards required, and the last thing we need is our boys in danger. Or you, for that matter.”

Will’s eyes narrowed. “You’re kidnapping me to the study?” he asked, voice flat.

“Quite a dramatic take on the matter, Will,” Hannibal replied, pushing himself to stand again. “I’m ensuring your safety by eliminating obstacles that would put you at risk.”

“I guess I’ll just stand completely still in an empty room for the next four or so months, so I don’t accidentally suffocate in the sheets.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, Will.”

“Me? *I’m* being ridiculous?” Will took a step back, away from Hannibal. Hannibal fought down a growl.

“You were told you would need to be on bed rest.”

Will rolled his eyes. “I was told I *might* need to be on bed rest, at the tail end of the pregnancy. Not right this second!”

Hannibal stepped towards Will, tall, imposing, radiating displeased Alpha hormones. Will was too furious to give in to placating instincts.

“It’s the best thing for you and the pups, Will.”

“I’m *not* letting you force me into bed for four months out of some stupid Alpha posturing thing!”

Hannibal did growl then, a deep warning thing that Will felt in his bones. But the anger was still hot in him, hot enough to hold at bay the instincts that ached to whine and bow and placate.

"You will do what you're told."

"Will I? Like I always have?" Will shot back, one hand on his belly, the other on his hip. He was tired. He'd ridden an emotional rollercoaster already this morning and the pups were exhausting in the afternoons, when the kicking usually started. He had no patience for this at all. "And if I don't, you'll lock me in the study?"

"If it comes to that."

"Oh?" Will feigned shock, the rudeness of it enough to rile Hannibal further. "Well I'll save you the trouble. I'll lock *myself* in our bedroom and you can drive yourself mad with safety until you've built a moat around the place."

“Will.” Hannibal’s voice was firm, unyielding. It occurred to Will that, in his state, he would not be able to outrun Hannibal and make it to the bedroom first.

But then again, Hannibal would want to be cautious with him. It was certainly worth the attempt.

“Will,” Hannibal said again, sounding slightly more desperate as Will took a step towards the stairs. “Will, you’re more at risk than we thought you were. It wouldn’t be permanent.”

“You’re better than this,” Will told him, spinning on his heels and racing up the stairs. He could hear Hannibal following, heavy footsteps behind him, and sure enough, he’d caught up by the time Will reached the top of the stairs. He gripped Will’s upper arms, turning him so they faced each other.

“You could have fallen! You need to let me keep you safe. That’s my job!”

“‘Safe’ and ‘trapped’ are *not* the same thing, Hannibal!”

“Until the pups are born, I can’t see you come to harm, Will, I cannot. I won’t allow it.”

“If you do this, Hannibal, you won’t see me at all.” Will pointed out. The words hit hard, cut deep, and were enough to allow Will to wriggle free of Hannibal’s hold and make it to the

bedroom, where he very deliberately locked the door and pressed his back against it.

Hannibal could break in, if he needed, hell, if he *wanted* . But he had once kept a promise Will had never expected, and he hoped the door would be as safe a barrier for him now, as it had been then. He slid down it to sit on the floor, groaning quietly until he found a position that didn't make him feel like he was tangled up like a pretzel.

Beyond the door, Hannibal was pacing, but he made no move to extricate Will from his self-made prison.

Will didn't know how long he sat there before he had to push himself up to get to the bed instead, but he knew it was evening when he woke and the light beyond the window was a greying cool blue. He cast his eyes to the door and found it still whole and still closed. If Hannibal had come in while Will was sleeping, he'd left no sign, and with a sigh, Will pushed himself up to go to the bathroom.

Mere minutes after he'd slipped back into bed, there was a knock at the door.

"Will. Sweet boy." Hannibal sounded more desperate than manipulative. "I've brought you some dinner. You don't have to see me, but you *do* need to eat."

Will hated that he was right. It seemed unfair for Hannibal to be right about anything, when he had been so *wrong* earlier. With a sigh, he stood, one hand bracing his back. He was beginning to ache from his time on the floor. He would have killed to have Hannibal's warm hands working the knots out, but of course, Hannibal was busy being an *idiot.*

Hannibal did indeed have a tray of food. When Will took it from him and made to retreat, Hannibal caught the edge of the door.

"Will, please talk to me. Let me explain."

Will eyed him coolly. "You can come in," he decided, "but if you try to lock me up…"

"I won't," Hannibal promised.

With a sigh Will let the door go and made his way back to bed, setting the tray to the side as he climbed in and padded himself up with pillows before reaching for it again. Hannibal looked on, desperate to help but forcing himself to hold back. Will was not one to be won over by force. Assertiveness, yes, but never force. When Will started to eat, Hannibal moved to sit on the edge of the bed.

"You have to understand, there is nothing more important to me than you and our pups," Hannibal started, and Will believed him. That, he did believe. What irked him was how quickly Hannibal fell back to what he so often claimed to be archaic and outdated practices between their dynamics.

"My aim," he continued. "Was not to trap you, but to protect you, so you would not need to worry for your safety as you rest, or climbing the stairs when it gets difficult, or making a nest when the time comes."

“You can’t wrap me in bubble wrap, Hannibal,” Will sighed, setting his fork down. He was hungry, he was *ravenous,* but he hated how any conflict between the two of them entirely turned his stomach. The pups didn’t like it either, they’d been shifting about and kicking since Will locked himself in. “Something, somewhere, will always be dangerous.”

“I know,” Hannibal ceded, eyes on Will. “I know that. But let me try.”

Will folded his arms over his belly, trying to soothe his restless boys. “I don’t like when you make decisions for both of us like that. You can’t just get your way because you’re the Alpha. How well do you think our children will listen to me if they learn from you that my opinion doesn’t matter?”

Hannibal flinched.

“There are certain things I leave in your hands,” Will continued, “but those are *my* choices. I let you choose my meals and discipline me because it makes me feel safe. Because I have instincts too. But I *give* those things to you. You don’t get to *take* them.”

“I understand, Will.” Hannibal’s hands were tense fists in his lap. He’d been so tactile lately, Will knew it had to be killing him not to touch. He sighed, patting the bed beside him.

“Come here.”

Hannibal didn’t need telling twice. He settled in next to Will, shifting until Will was braced securely against his chest and he could cover Will’s stomach with both hands.

“Yes to the nest,” Will bargained, “But upstairs in our room. We’ll both feel safer there, and it already smells like us. We can store the bedframe in the basement. And I get to move around as much as I like until the doctor tells me I have to stay in bed.”

Hannibal turned his nose against Will’s hair, his fingers gently stroking over Will’s belly. He could feel the pups - his pups, *their* pups - moving about and it was an entirely otherworldly experience. For a moment he was struck dumb. Then he nodded.

“Upstairs until you have to stay in bed, then we move it to the study,” he offered back. “If you go into labor, that room is far easier to access than the bedroom.”

Will huffed, but a smile was warming his cheeks and with a sigh he ceded. “Fine. But I’m not broken, I can walk on my own. I promise I will be careful on the stairs, and anywhere else you’re seeing monsters in the shadows.”

“The rugs.”

“I’ll tiptoe around them and remain firmly on wooden floors at all times,” Will replied, relaxing when Hannibal’s laugh was sighed against him. Will turned his head to feel Hannibal’s cheek against his own and settled more heavily against him. “I would trust no one else protecting us than you. You provide, you comfort, you care. You dote on the pups and they’re not even born yet. You dote on *me* and I cause you no end of trouble.”

Hannibal kissed Will's cheek and held him closer, warm and safe. Will's smile grew by a degree.

"And the sex is incredible," he added.

Hannibal hid a laugh in Will's hair. "Menace," he said fondly.

"And I plan to continue to be so," Will told him, grinning. "You do realize that the nest is all on you, right? I can't lift anything heavier than the blankets."

Hannibal gave a long, dramatic sigh. "Such is the life of an Alpha, cursed to move mountains for his Omega."

"Not *mountains,"* Will corrected. "Just a mattress."

The doctor had not yet put Will on bed rest by the six month mark, but he found himself in the nest more often than out of it. It was the only place he could be even remotely comfortable, and he was frequently exhausted.

He was also frequently aroused, with little he could do about it. His particular size and shape made most of his former habits impossible, or exhaustingly inconvenient. Often, he found himself laying about, surrounded by the scent of his own slick and grumbling about his Alpha's useless job.

He wanted Hannibal home, so he could lay on him and nuzzle him and grumble about his aches and pains and get Hannibal to *fuck him* . Somehow, how *ever* , but some days the need was so powerful it was exhausting in itself, and Will found himself grumpy, almost angry by the time Hannibal returned home, through no fault of his own.

One night, having thrashed about unable to sleep, almost whining in his distress, Will woke his Alpha. "Touch me, I need you to touch me, Hannibal, please."

"Will -"

"I'm going out of my mind, I *need you* ." Will whimpered, desperate hands seeking over his strong, large, powerful mate, entire body electric in response to him. He spread his legs, wished he could turn over to properly present… God he hadn't been fucked in so long he wanted to cry from it. He couldn't even imagine how unsatisfied Hannibal was, unable to claim his Omega when he wanted.

And in reality, at this point Will's belly was enormous, working around it was almost impossible. But Hannibal was nothing if not creative.

He soothed Will with a kiss to his lips, a gentle tug to his curls, before shifting to lay between his spread thighs. Will smelled *divine* ; slick and precome and the sweetness of his pregnancy made Hannibal dizzy breathing him in. He'd never smelled anything he adored more. So with lazy, deliberate strokes of his tongue, Hannibal sucked Will's little cock between his lips with a moan.

The noise Will made was obscene. He dug his heels into the bed, doing his best to push into Hannibal's mouth even though everything was sore and stiff.

There were benefits to Omega stereotypes. Hannibal could take all of Will into his mouth with little effort, rubbing his tongue along the underside. Will responded with helpless little moans, spreading his thighs as wide as he could under Hannibal's hungry gaze.

Will couldn't see much of anything around his stomach, so he closed his eyes, letting Hannibal torment him with slow drags of his tongue. Two fingers teased at his entrance, slick-soaked and exactly what he needed.

"Please, Hannibal, god, I need it."

Hannibal hummed around him, piercing him suddenly , harsh enough to drive a cry from Will's throat.

"Yes, Alpha, *please."*

Hannibal overwhelmed him with sensation, sucking harshly at his cock and fucking him with deep, quick thrusts. Will squirmed, utterly trapped, unable to move towards or away.

Hannibal added a third finger and Will keened, hands curling hard in the sheets at his side, teeth gritted, forehead sweaty as he trembled and ached and pathetically tried to press closer to Hannibal. His sounds were helpless, aching, weak little things. Hannibal worked Will to a crest and eased back and his Omega whined so pitifully he had to sit up and gently kiss Will's throat to soothe him.

"Let me take care of you," he murmured. "Let me wind you up, bring you such pleasure you'll forget your own name, sweet thing. Let me."

Will shuddered and came from his words alone, whimpering when Hannibal returned to worship his little cock again, licking him clean, teasing him to hardness again as Hannibal's fingers fucked into Will. The slick sounds of skin on skin were music to Will's ears, he felt, for a moment, as though nothing hurt at all, as though nothing could, if he could just hang in this precarious balance of pleasure and pain.

When Hannibal made him come again, Will sobbed, bringing a hand to his face and pressing to his eyes.

" *Alpha* ," he whined, trying to lift his hips for Hannibal, trying to make it easier for him.

Hannibal didn't answer, did not do anything but draw wave after wave of agonizing pleasure from Will. He curled his fingers to torment Will's prostate, focused his mouth on the head of Will's cock, and worked him easily with everything he'd learned about his boy.

The third orgasm was more pain than pleasure, but Will couldn't bear for it to stop. He sobbed and shrieked, thrashing so much that Hannibal had to grip his hip and hold him still, leaving fingerprint bruises on his pale skin.

It seemed to go on forever, leaving Will at the edge of a steep cliff, but eventually, Hannibal managed to work a fourth, screaming climax from him. Will's words were slurred, high pitched little pleas for mercy from his Alpha, apologies for wrongs he had not committed. Finally, a promise to be good that had Hannibal pulling away with a grin.

"Will you, sweet Omega?" He asked, punctuating his question with another gentle curl of his fingers. Will yelped, kicking out at nothing, his ankles tangled in the various blankets that made up their nest.

"Yes, yes, Alpha!"

Hannibal slid his fingers free and came to rest beside Will, kissing tears from the corners of his eyes. "I certainly hope not, I love you too much to see you changed."

Will whined, but it was far more satisfied than pained. He trembled for a few moments more, his body settling into rest after such agitation. As his need was sated, his desire to be near his Alpha grew, and Will turned as best he could to nuzzle against his mate, breathing him in, clinging with weak little fingers to him until sleep took him and Will relaxed into rest.

Hannibal stroked his hair, kissed his forehead, nosed against Will's face as the other slept. He was a lovely thing, hungry and demanding, truly *good* when it mattered, and clever when he had to be. He would be a brilliant parent to their pups. Hannibal fell asleep cradling Will against him, Will's head back against Hannibal's shoulder, resting half on and half off his chest. Soon, now, he would take time from work to care for Will more thoroughly. Soon, their household of two would double in size.

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

> *Will hurt. He hurt everywhere, he was exhausted and sweaty, and he had no idea why anyone did this more than once. But his boys. Tiny and loud and so sweet.*
>
> *"Look," he said, looking from one set of pale, unfocused blue eyes to the other. "Hannibal. We made these."*

Chapter Notes

> A very *very* squint-and-you'll-miss-it mention of breastfeeding coz we aren't super keen on it either but otherwise your usual post butt-baby fun!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will woke knowing something was different. He couldn't place it or explain it but his entire body was totally attuned to *something* and wouldn't let him return to rest.

Hannibal was in the kitchen, Will knew that because if he wasn't in the nest with him he was in the kitchen, preparing food ahead so he wasn't away from Will when Will needed him most. So that wasn't off, that wasn't strange. But something -

A kick, very deliberate, and very harsh to Will's belly made him groan, and when he dropped a hand to cradle his stomach, to soothe his feisty little boys, his body shifted, cramped for a moment, and the nest was suddenly sodden with fluids. Will's eyes widened.

"Hannibal!" he called, still tentative, still unsure, until another kick heralded another cramp that gripped him hard and Will was suddenly *very fucking sure* . "Hannibal! *Alpha* !"

Will didn't remember the drive to the hospital, only that Hannibal kept his eyes on the road and one hand deliberately in Will's. Once inside, Will was seen immediately, and Hannibal caught by a passing nurse to gather Will's details for the admission paperwork.

Later, a doctor would politely recall Will's behavior without his Alpha as "nervous." Hannibal would say he'd been an uncooperative menace. Will denied responsibility. Any Omega in labor separated from their Alpha would *absolutely* have started growling at nurses.

Labor was arduous. Will had a vague memory of a lot of screaming, mostly (but not all) his, and that Hannibal had needed to leave the room for the epidural because the sight of someone

approaching his Omega with the needle had panicked him.

But it was over. It was over and they were *here* , fussy, messy, squalling little things. Will was barely able to let them out of his sight to be cleaned and weighed, and when they were finally returned to him, he didn't think he could ever let go. One boy rested against Will's bare chest, the other was cradled in Hannibal's arms, a concession Will had only allowed if Hannibal had come to sit beside him on the bed.

Will hurt. He hurt *everywhere* , he was exhausted and sweaty, and he had no idea why anyone did this more than once. But his *boys.* Tiny and loud and so sweet.

"Look," he said, looking from one set of pale, unfocused blue eyes to the other. "Hannibal. We made these."

Hannibal reached out to stroke Will's curls from his forehead. His remarkable, powerful, courageous Omega who had fought through blood and pain to bring these two to the world. He leaned in to kiss Will next, just a gentle brush of lips, a nuzzle, nose to nose.

"You did so well, Will. Brave, beautiful boy."

Will hummed. He was so sleepy, the drugs and the exhaustion of the labor catching up to him. But he couldn't sleep until he knew the pups were safe, with Hannibal or himself or them both.

"God, we need to name them."

One of the boys, the one Will held close, had a head of the most extraordinary curls, just like Will's own. They were drying in puffs and waves and Will couldn't help but gently untangle them with his fingers. Many infants lost the hair they were born with, but Will hoped his boy retained his. His brother, in Hannibal's arms, was entirely bald, but contented to snuggle against his father with sleepy determination.

The way Hannibal held his boy, as though he were the most precious thing on earth, made something catch in Will's throat. The Alpha's hands were large enough to almost enclose the tiny thing between them.

"I've always liked the name Jude," Hannibal admitted, casting an amused gaze to Will. "Perhaps I was influenced in formative years by that dastardly British pop band."

Will laughed, reaching out to stroke his knuckles down the little boy's back.

"Jude," he tried it on for size, found himself smiling at the sound of it. "What shall we name your brother?"

Hannibal hummed thoughtfully. "I *am* the eighth of my name."

Will snorted. " *What?* "

"Count Hannibal Lecter the Eighth, although I'm afraid the title is meaningless nowadays."

Will looked from Hannibal to the curly haired boy in his arms, the sweet, *tiny* little thing. "No."

"I merely thought-"

" *No* , Hannibal, the name's bigger than he is!"

"He'd grow into it," Hannibal suggested, but he was giving Will that fond, over-the-moon smile he always seemed to wear lately.

Will shook his head, bending to brush his lips over the soft crown of his pup's head. "Try again."

"No preferences of your own?"

Will shrugged. "I got to hold them inside me for the better part of a year. I want you to have something special with them, too. Besides, I have veto power."

Hannibal shifted Jude to one arm, reaching to brush a finger over the tuft of hair on the nameless pup's head. "He's quite a lucky thing, to have gotten your curls."

Will smiled fondly, a faint blush rising to his cheeks. "What were you thinking?"

"Felix."

Will's smile eased, not to disappointment, not to displeasure, but to adoration. He ducked his head to look at the little thing on his chest, watched as his pup yawned and pressed his lips together again without once waking.

"Felix," he murmured, looking up at Hannibal again. "I think it's perfect."

They were at the hospital just a day more, so the doctors could monitor Will's vitals, check that the placenta had been fully delivered, keep up his fluids through a drip. A nurse came by to sit with Will as he attempted to feed his babies, helping him with suggestions for how to hold them, how to balance, how to make sure they properly latched.

Once free, Hannibal drove them all home, Will in the back with their boys in his arms, not taking his eyes off them for a moment.

The nest downstairs would need to be unmade and washed, and Hannibal guided Will upstairs to their room where they'd kept one prepared for their arrival home. They had decided to forgo cribs, to keep their boys safe in a family nest until they were old enough to sleep on their own. They had purchased most other things in preparation for the pups, and Hannibal set about meticulously readying the room for what he supposed would be several days of them not leaving it for anything but emergencies.

He would go between the kitchen and the room to make sure all were fed, but the rest of the things they would need, more sheets, blankets, the pups' first clothes, their little tub… things Will would need, drinks with electrolytes to keep him hydrated, formula for Hannibal to use

when Will needed to sleep and the boys needed to be fed, books, his laptop if he felt strong enough to watch to reach for it…

When Will set their pups to the nest and knelt beside them, they still looked comically tiny. Sleepy, wrinkled little things that woke up only to feed and whimper. Soon, they would open their eyes for more than a moment, soon they would look about, curious, and see the world and their parents.

Will was enraptured by them, no matter how still they slept. He needed rest as well, and often slept curled around them, letting his body recover.

Hannibal had taken to sleeping at the edge of their nest, with Will and their pups tucked safely against the wall. Though he logically knew they were all as safe as they could possibly be, he couldn't stop his instinctive certainty that he needed to be ready to protect his family from danger.

The first problem arose when the day of the boys' first check up came. They'd only been out in the world for about a week, and though Will had bathed and dressed them for the occasion, when it came time to put his own shoes on, he balked.

"Make him come here," he decided, backing into a corner with both boys held close. "Or better yet, just cancel. I don't want him to touch them."

"Will," Hannibal's tone wasn't patronizing, but it was exhausted. Neither had gotten much rest as the boys learned the capacities of their lungs together. "This is to keep them safe, not hurt them."

"I know," Will did, he'd read enough books before the birth and more after, when he just couldn't get to sleep with the pups wriggling about. He knew what was important and what was necessary, his mate was a *doctor* for god's sake, he understood what was happening and saw no danger in it. But knowing and being able to control the instincts that *screamed* at Will to keep his boys safe were very different things.

In the end, they got into the car.

Will had taken to winding two heavy silk scarves across his body to hold his boys near against him. He kept his arms folded beneath, as much to put up a front of displeasure as to support them should they squirm in their sleep. By the time they got to the clinic Will's expression had gone from stoic to panicked.

"Hannibal," he managed through gritted teeth. "I don't know if I can do this."

Hannibal turned to face him, reaching through to the back seat to cup Will's cheek. "You can. You've already been so brave."

"No," Will whispered, "No, I really can't."

These instincts and worries were completely natural in the first few months postpartum, and the pediatrician would no doubt be prepared, but it did not stop a sudden flare of nervousness

in Hannibal. Will could be downright vicious if he felt he had to.

However, he was also running almost entirely on Omegan instinct at this point, and it was possible Hannibal could manipulate that.

“Will,” he said sternly, “I am going to come around and get you out of the car, and I expect obedience.”

Will whined, displeased, but did nothing to retaliate as Hannibal got out of the car and came around to the back. He moved when Hannibal moved him, pouted when he was made to stand by the car as Hannibal got the paperwork for their boys from his suitcase and locked up. He moved only because his Alpha was there, only because he had an arm around Will that rested strong and heavy and reliable against him.

In the lobby, Hannibal spoke, Will just leaned against him. He looked down to Felix and Jude, both sleeping soundly where they’d been wrapped, and felt his breathing ease a little. They were safe. They were safe and they were right there where Will could see them, where he could feel their tiny heartbeats so close to his own.

When Hannibal said his name, Will followed him.

The doctor was a comely, smiling man that Will supposed he would learn to trust. He had nothing against him, truly, only that he was about to touch Will’s pups, and no one but their fathers could do that. They were too young, surely, to be handled by others. Too vulnerable to be away from Will’s warmth.

He didn’t listen as the doctor spoke to Hannibal, he didn’t listen as Hannibal answered back. He followed them both into the small room for check ups and stared blankly at the brightly colored posters on the walls. When Hannibal said his name, Will looked over, turning to let Hannibal take Felix out first, holding his son against him, before reaching for Jude next. Will had no doubt Hannibal could hold them securely, he had no doubt whatsoever that with him they would not come to harm.

But then they were passed over to the doctor, and Will’s breathing picked up before he knew what to do.

“Don’t -”

“Will.”

“He *can’t-“* Will took a step towards the doctor, teeth bared. Hannibal caught him gently, hauling him back with an arm around his waist and a hand over his throat. Not enough to choke, but enough for the pressure of Hannibal’s fingers to guide Will’s head back into his shoulder.

“Shh… they’re safe, sweet boy. You’ve done so well. Such a good father to our pups.”

Will whined unhappily, beginning to shake in Hannibal’s arms.

One of the boys - Jude, he knew it was Jude, of *course* he knew the voices of his children - cried out, startled by the cold stethoscope against his chest. Will lunged and had to be forcibly dragged back, a sharp reprimand in his ear.

“We have restraints if you need them,” a nurse suggested helpfully. “It’s okay, all the mamas get like this.”

The sound Will made was a mingling of a growl and a panicked whine, he bared his teeth at the nurse who seemed unfazed, before Hannibal tugged him back against him.

“Will,” he murmured, arm slipping through Will’s catching his elbows so he couldn’t use his arms to fight. His other he lay heavy over Will’s collarbone, restraining but reassuring, his palm soft against his shoulder. “Will, listen to me. It’s my job, my entire life, to keep you and our boys safe. If they were in danger now, I would not be holding you here, I would be fighting for them, do you understand?”

“But he’s scared,” Will whined, as Jude fussed and cried out a little louder. “He’s *scared* , Hannibal, do something.”

“He’s safe,” Hannibal repeated, turning his nose against Will’s hair. He tried guiding Will’s face to his neck, to the scent glands Will could breathe against and soothe himself but found his hand almost bitten when he reached for him. “Always that mouth of yours,” he murmured, too quiet for anyone but Will to hear, before restraining him as before.

Hannibal was stronger than Will, he was larger. He was *meant to be* . But it didn’t stop Will fighting with every ounce of energy he could muster to get to his pups as they squirmed and mewled under the doctor’s touches.

Every cry pierced right through Will, until he too was crying, angry and worried tears spilling over his cheeks. He felt betrayed and bereft, held so far away from his pups that he couldn’t even *smell* them. Eventually, their fussing grew to an irritated wail, and Will felt a fresh surge of panic. He thrashed so hard that Hannibal set his teeth to the nape of Will’s neck and bit down, freezing Will with a pinch to the pressure points there.

“ *Alpha* ,” Will whined, but Hannibal would not be swayed. He held Will like that until the nurse came to offer Jude to them, and only then did he release his neck.

Will took Jude with shaking hands, clutching him tight to his chest. The boy sniffled unhappily, but seemed to recognize Will’s scent. He settled down after only a moment, just in time for Felix to be handed over as well.

Once he had both boys cradled in his arms again, Will’s legs gave out. Hannibal helped to lower him gently to the floor, letting Will cry and nuzzle at his pups, licking them, marking them with his scent.

Hannibal kept an eye on him, though he hardly needed to; adrenaline had left Will and he was exhausted, he wouldn’t attempt to flee anywhere now that his pups were back with him and near. He did listen to what the doctor said, however. That the boys were healthy for their age,

that they were moving as they should be, following movement with their eyes, reaching, making sounds, responding as week-old pups should.

“You should be very proud,” he added, smiling at Will, who didn’t even look his way. “That’s a fierce protector they have.”

“I am,” Hannibal assured him, nodding when the doctor and nurse left the two of them to gather themselves. Hannibal sank into a crouch before Will and gently touched his cheek.

“Will, my brave sweet boy, all is well.”

Will blinked up at him, Jude and Felix settled back into their wraps and already dozing, close to Will again, breathing in his scent and soothing themselves on it. Will’s face was streaked in tears but he didn’t seem to care, his eyes weren’t on fire with gold anymore, just their natural, beautiful blue.

“They’re okay?”

“Meeting every milestone, as they should be. You’ve taken such good care of them.”

A brightness bloomed in Will’s eyes before exhaustion overtook him once more. He nodded sleepily, looking back down at his pups, unable to tear his eyes away for long. They’d been so far away. He’d heard them crying and done *nothing* , and it was a struggle for him to feel okay about that.

“Up we go.” Hannibal hoisted Will up with hands under his arms, settling him on his feet with a gentle nuzzle to his jaw. Will was a bundle of instinct and emotion. Hannibal thought he shouldn’t even be out of the nest yet, not so soon after the birth. “You’ll all take a nap when we get home,” he said. It was not a suggestion. Soon enough, Will would be back to his stubborn, independent self, but Hannibal was happy for a chance to be fully Alpha for a bit. It made him feel like his family was truly safe.

Will fled to the bedroom immediately once they were home. By the time Hannibal caught up to him, the boys had been stripped, the offending clothes tossed as far as Will could throw them.

“They smell wrong,” Will growled, dressing them in fresh clothes from their pile. “Too many people touching them. They don’t need anyone but us.”

Hannibal said nothing, allowed Will his space to dress the pups and touch them. He closed the door gently and just watched, the little things reaching out awkwardly for Will’s fingers when he held them near their faces, making cooing sounds of pleasure when Will leaned in to kiss their bare little bellies before he dressed them fully again.

When Will curled up protectively around them, Hannibal took off his coat and shoes and joined them in the nest, nuzzling up behind Will and wrapping him in his arms. They dozed, Will exhausted from the surge of hormones and emotions, Hannibal contented to see his Omega calm once more. But when Will woke, there was a tension in him again. Hannibal hummed softly and kissed his cheek.

“God, was I really so embarrassing?” Will whispered, one hand seeking Hannibal’s where it rested over his stomach. He was still getting used to the fact that the pups that had swollen it so round were out here, now, in front of them, asleep on their backs and dreaming sweet dreams. “I never, ever, wanted to be that kind of Omega.”

Hannibal kissed behind Will’s ear and pushed himself to sit up, stroking down Will’s side until his mate looked up at him, flushed with humiliation and brows drawn high.

“The doctor must’ve… Hannibal I’m sorry, I didn’t think it’d -” he’d made Hannibal look bad in front of another Alpha, he’d put Hannibal in a position where he had to *discipline* him in public. “I’ll find a way to apologize, I’ll -”

“You were so fierce in protecting them,” Hannibal told him, leaning down to nuzzle his Omega. “So fierce that the doctor advised me to be very proud of the bravery of my mate. And I am, Will, very proud, every day.”

Will’s flush turned pleased, proud. He reached for Hannibal, pulling him back down into the safety of their nest. Hannibal intertwined himself firmly in Will, reaching over to rest his hand over Felix’s tiny belly, Jude just a tad out of his reach.

“You’ve given me such beautiful pups, and I know they’ll be safe with you.”

Will nodded, nuzzling under Hannibal’s chin. “But let’s not test that, okay? Let’s spend a few days in the nest together. Or weeks.”

They’d agreed to spend the first year or so in a family nest, but Will was beginning to feel like he’d like to keep his boys with him until college. The constant frantic worry was exhausting.

“We’ll be together,” Hannibal promised. “I wouldn’t leave you to care for two newborns alone, Will. We have a few more weeks before I go back to work.”

Will nodded, pressing himself closer to Hannibal and resting a hand against his chest to feel his heart, slow and sure, beat against it. A few weeks before Hannibal returned to work, but an entire life together raising their boys. Watching them grow, watching them learn to walk and talk and play, teaching them to read and write, teaching them the importance of treating everyone equally, regardless of dynamic. Will imagined Hannibal teaching them to cook, both boys attentive and playful behind his back, he imagined the four of them going camping.

Will didn’t know when he fell asleep, but he woke surrounded by his family; Hannibal dozed still, and one of the boys was fussing, and Will had to bite his lip to keep himself from crying, because this, surely, was what happiness felt like.

Chapter End Notes

The end!! For now!! We had a couple of fun ideas for them later on so there might be timestamps! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HANGING OUT WITH US AND OUR BOYS, AND WHISKEY'S VERY FIRST ABO FIC EVER!

End Notes

Quatervois

: (n.) a crossroads; a critical decision or turning point in one's life.

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